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Lady Blount.
With the sincere regards &
best wishes of the Author.

HIDDEN LINKS;

OR,

THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HIDDEN LINKS;

OR,

THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.

CHAPTER I.

"At school each other's prompters, day by day,
Companions in the frolic or the fray."

CRABBE.

IN the midst of a somewhat open tract of land in a northern county, there is visible an object which, even at a distance, is not unlikely to arrest the attention, and excite the curiosity of the traveller.

Nearly on the summit of a broad hill stands out, in bold relief, a mass of wide and continuous buildings, which, to one taking a nearer view of

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them, appear imposing, if not from any architectural pretensions, at least from the height and size of the structure.

An immense quadrangle presents an almost similar face to the four quarters. On one side, however, there is a conspicuous addition, which forms a marked contrast with the plain aspect of the main building, and the eye would be instantly caught by the high-pitched roof, the crocheted pinnacles, and the floristed crosses of a small Gothic church.

The spectator would be tempted to draw near the edifice, in order to examine more closely the beauty of its details, and, in the playfully flowing tracery and the deeply cut mullions of its windows, the uncouth gurgoyles, the corbels and mouldings, and a thousand minutiae of exquisite finish, he would admit and wonder at the perfect revival of ancient design and mediæval art.

The surrounding grounds are laid out with simplicity and a general uniformity. A space of eighteen or twenty acres is mostly walled round, intersected with parallel walks, bordered with

mountain ash trees or Scotch firs; and, here and there, are racket courts, ball places, and the various appurtenances of a college play-ground.

Such, indeed, it is; and such was the general appearance of the edifice and its environs at the time when my tale commences.

It was a beautiful morning in the "merrie" month of May. Not a cloud was to be seen in the sky above; the unchecked rays of the creative sun were calling into existence countless beings on the earth below, and the air between was filled with the songs of birds, and the musical hum of myriads of insects.

But within and around the college there was no sound of the human voice, and it would not have been suspected, from aught, at least, that could be seen or heard, that these walls contained some two hundred inmates, nearly all of them in the very heyday of youth and spirits. Here and there, indeed, might be descried some slowly pacing figure, with eyes fixed on a book or manuscript; or, perchance, a glimpse might

be caught of the collegiate dress of the pupil, or of the gown of the Professor, through the vista of the long-drawn corridor, or among the lines of the trees in the play-ground, converted for the nonce into the *sanctum* of some peripatetic student.

But all was silent on that May morning. Silent! With the first chimes from the tower clock announcing half-past eight arose a deafening and astounding uproar. From the great bell, from whose solemn tongue proceeded with undeviating regularity the daily summons to each of the various punctual duties of academic life, issued forth a voice as different to its monotonous call as are the drawling tones of a mendicant ballad-singer to the ringing shout of a child at play. It seemed to say, as plainly as bell could speak, "Come forth from your school-rooms and study places, come round me, and let us all laugh, and dance, and shout together—leave Demosthenes and Æschines to abuse each other without an audience—banish Ovid—plague take Thucydides—leave Aristophanes to

the clouds—Homer in the dark—Horace in his cups—Virgil at his farm, and let Lucian crack his jokes alone with Charon.” And the great bell seemed to laugh and roar at such allusions, all scholastic as they were, and to shake its round sides in its jovial mirth, its deep notes chiming in with the hip-hip hurraing of all the boys in chorus around it, till their tongues grew dry, and their lungs failed, and their arms were tired of swinging it backwards and forwards. Such was the commencement of the holiday.

“Come Harry,” said a youth, fifteen or sixteen years old, to another, two or three years his junior, “let us have a lark to day.”

“With all my heart. What shall it be?”

“Let us hire some horses and have a scurry over the country. There’s Fred Courtenay, we’ll ask him to come with us. Fred, Harry and I are going down to Saddletree’s; we are resolved to have a gallop; will you join us? We shall have plenty of time to get back for dinner.”

“To be sure I will,” replied the boy, his eyes glistening with delight.

“And you’ll stand the expense, won’t you, Fred?” said the first speaker.

“No, no,” interrupted the youth who had been first addressed, “you have done that too often already. We will all share alike, or I won’t go.”

“Well, well,” rejoined the proposer of the freak, rather hastily, “it’s no use making a fuss about a trifle; I was only joking.”

The lark, as it was called, was still further discussed and agreed upon, and the three youths then separated, intending to leave the refectory after breakfast, one by one, to escape notice.

In the meanwhile, I will devote a few lines to a sketch of our new acquaintances; for they are destined to be some of the principal actors in my mimic show.

Dermod O’Neill was the eldest of the three youths. His father possessed a considerable property in Ireland, which was then, however, in the unfortunate condition of a no small proportion of the estates in that country. Mr. O’Neill’s was, in fact, in many points, the too common history

of an Irish gentleman's career. A thoughtless prodigality, an overweening vanity, a love of show, with a mistaken view of his position, and of the necessity of maintaining it, had combined to exhaust his annual resources, and embarrass his affairs. Perhaps these faults might have been attributable, in part, to pride of ancestry, for, springing from a pure Milesian stock, Mr. O'Neill deemed such an origin to confer a patent of precedence above the descendant of the proudest Norman or the boldest Saxon who might have followed the banner and shared the fortunes of Earl Strongbow. Ostentation and prodigality in such a one, was, according to his ideas, the legitimate upholding of ancestral dignity.

As Mr. O'Neill advanced in years, his recklessness diminished, but long habit was too strong to allow him to adapt his expenses to his reduced income. Taking advantage of the spirit of competition, which was giving a fictitious value to land, his aim now was to raise his rents to the utmost. The consequence was obvious; and in the perpetual disagreement and contests which

ensued between landlord and tenant, the old feudal maxim "*qui terre a guerre a,*" was thoroughly exemplified.

His son, Dermot, very soon understood the state of his father's affairs, and many points of his character owed much of their development to the force of his father's principles and conduct; and if there was aught of selfishness, craft, deceit, or falsehood in his idiosyncrasy, it was not likely to be checked by the constant before him exhibition of what was considered the fair and open game of over-reaching a creditor, or shirking a dun.

Dermot was by no means ill-looking, but a physiognomist could not have mistaken his character.

To him there could not be a greater contrast than Frederick Courtenay. He was now entering his fifteenth year—the model of a fine and handsome boy. No thought of falsehood or guile could lurk beneath his high white brow; his clear and sparkling blue eye seemed both to proclaim the openness of his own heart, and to

look for a return of confidence, while the quick and eager grasp of his hand, and his active, unhesitating manners told of an ardent, affectionate, and willing disposition.

Yet Fred had his faults—nor were they few; he was clever, but vain, thoughtless and volatile too; he would fly from one occupation or study to another, tiring of a pursuit just when success became certain, and the object was about to be grasped, and rather than apply his mind to sift a question, whether of mental or moral action, he would rely on the impulse of the moment, or yield unthinkingly and blindly to the opinion and guidance of others. Courtenay might have taken for his motto: “When I do trust a man, I trust him wholly;” a generous principle, indeed, but one which Fred was too likely to apply indiscriminately. To conclude my sketch:

“ A mind it is,
Accessible to reason’s subtlest rays,
And many enter there, but none converge,
An arch without a key-stone.”

Henry Montague was Courtenay’s cousin.

They were about the same age, they had played together in their infancy and childhood, and made common cause in the first trying days of college life. They were almost inseparable when at school, and were often companions during their vacations. Montague was more quiet, more prudent, more determined ; his abilities were as great, his perseverance greater than Courtenay's. There was less to fear for him in his journey through life.

We left the three schoolfellows just after they had agreed upon their truant expedition.

Cautiously they stole, one by one, out of the college grounds, now peeping round an angle of the boundary wall, now crouching, cat-like, under a hedge, now darting through a copse or bounding across some exposed place which might be within the range of some watchful eye ; nor was it till fairly beyond the precincts of the college that they united, with slackened steps and upright gait.

"Well, here we are, and I hope all safe," said Harry Montague.

"I don't know," replied Courtenay, "old Orderly looked desperately hard and very suspiciously at me as I walked out of the refectory."

"I went straight up to him," said O'Neill, "and asked permission to take a pair of shoes to the village to be mended."

"Well," said Fred, "they'll not catch us now; we will have our fun, come what may;" and the handsome boy vaulted like a deer over a wall, and led the way, laughing and shouting down the green slope of the hill.

It was not the first time they had been to Mr. Saddletree's stables for the same purpose. They all three rode with ease and courage, and their boyish spirits, ignorant of danger, could quite appreciate the excitement which boldness and mastery alone can give, when, as the old dramatist says, we—

"Feel our horses
Like proud seas under us."

We will not follow them in their "lark," or

“scurry,” nor will I chronicle the results of their races across Pewit Common, nor tell how Dermot won a five shilling sweepstakes, nor how Fred got a fall while pressing his horse at an awkward fence as they galloped across farmer Thompson’s meadows. Their steeds were pretty well tired when they re-entered the stable-yard, and, having mollified the horse-dealer by an extra half-sovereign for a few scratches Fred’s horse had got in his fall, they commenced their journey homewards.

“What shall you say, Fred,” asked Montague, “if your crushed hat should be noticed!”

“Say!” interposed O’Neill, “just say that some one smashed it yesterday as we were playing at prisoners’ base; or, that Jack Dumpling sat upon it in the school-room.”

“No,” replied Fred, “that won’t do. I won’t tell a lie about it, though I need not say how it was done. It was all the fault of the horse, I am sure, for I put him straight at the fence, and had him well in hand too; I don’t believe Tom Oliver himself could have saved him.”

Thus consoling his wounded vanity, Fred forgot his crushed hat, and they pushed on briskly till they came to a bridge about two miles from home. Here they halted, and all three stood looking over the parapet upon the clear smooth water below.

"How hot it is!" said Montague, as he wiped his heated brow.

"How I should like to be that fish!" exclaimed Fred, as he saw a trout rise greedily at a fly, and splash the water in an eddy round it.

"Let us bathe," suggested O'Neill; "it will cool us, and then no one will be able to tell from our looks that we have been out of the house."

"Agreed, agreed!" and they jumped over the wall into the meadow, in search of some convenient and secluded place.

At about three or four hundred yards from the bridge they came to a spot which seemed exactly suited to their purpose; circled on three sides by a belt of trees, a low meadow, such as

in some counties is called a "haugh," ran down to the river, which, emerging from a thicket, came tumbling amid rocks and stones like a reeling drunkard, till a gentler inclination of its bed united its broken waters in a deep and strong current, which finally seemed to subside into almost perfect stillness, ere it stole away on the opposite side of the glen.

In a few minutes they were all in the full enjoyment of their bath, though the water—as yet but little warmed by the rays of a vernal sun, struck coldly upon their heated bodies.

Dermod was a strong and active swimmer, and when a mere child had been wont to buffet the waves of the broad Atlantic, as, from the pathless expanse of the far west, they came to fling their foamy crests upon the Irish coast.

Courtenay's vanity made him consider himself almost equally expert, so he dashed off after O'Neill, ignorant of the strength and depth of the current.

Dermod had almost reached the bottom of the glen, when he heard a cry, and turning round,

saw Montague running along the bank, pointing to a rock round which the water circled in a deep and treacherous current.

"Fred is drowning! Fred is drowning!" he exclaimed; "help him, Dermod! help him!"

It was too true; cramp had seized Courtenay's limbs, and, with a scream of fright and anguish, Harry had seen him disappear.

Dermod had to swim against the current to the spot where Fred had sunk, then, as he was no longer visible, he dived boldly after him. He rose for breath, foiled in his attempt; a few seconds, which to Harry seemed like hours, and he again plunged deep into the pool. He remained below longer than before, and, on rising, two objects this time broke the surface of the sullen waters. The current had carried them many yards below the fatal spot where Courtenay had gone down, and Montague, whose eyes had been riveted on one place, saw O'Neill rise like an apparition in another, supporting with difficulty the apparently lifeless body of their companion. Senseless and ghastly, the poor fellow was laid

upon the grass, and O'Neill sank down exhausted beside him.

Harry slipped on his clothes and ran back to the road, intending to seek assistance at a cottage which was not far from the bridge. As he was climbing over the wall by the side of the road he heard the sound of a horse trotting briskly towards him, and his heart bounded with joy as he recognised the white face and legs of the animal, which, in part from the roughness of his action (on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle), in part from the avocations of his owner, was well known by the name of Bonesetter.

"What, slipped away this morning !" said the rider, laughing.

"Oh, sir !" cried Harry, "come with me, Fred Courtenay is drowned !"

"Drowned !"

"Yes, sir, I fear so ; but, perhaps, you may save him yet."

Bonesetter had now and then carried his master slowly perhaps, but safely, with the county hounds. In a moment he cleared the wall, and,

with Harry running by his side, was trotting fast to the scene of the accident.

Anxiously did Mr. Cardamon bend over the corpse-like form of the poor boy. He was not a man to look despondingly on a case, or to magnify the difficulty in order to enhance the merit of the cure ; but it was easy to see that his fears were greater than his hopes. To the frequent inquiries of the frightened youths, he only answered—

“Wait a while, he may still come round. I have seen cases quite as bad,” together with other equivocal expressions of encouragement.

At length his features brightened. “Thank God ! he is reviving,” were the words that fell like a message from heaven on the ears of O’Neill and Montague.

As soon as the surgeon pronounced his patient to be really recovering, Montague left the cottage to which Courtenay had been carried, and bent his steps to the college, to announce the sad result of their escapade. His steps, but a few hours ago so light and elastic, were dull and

heavy now, and upon his heart, then buoyant with merriment and the excitement of the stolen excursion, there now pressed a weight of fear, of care, and of self reproach.

“But he lives,” said he to himself, repeating the doctor’s assurance, “and will be better soon. They will be very angry and perhaps we shall be expelled—poor Fred ! surely he will not, he has been punished enough. But I don’t care what they do to me now that I know Fred will not die. Oh, how dreadful it would have been if he had been drowned !”

Thus he went on communing with himself.

He was approaching the College walls, when he caught a glimpse of the formidable prefect, “Old Orderly.” Not that this epithet was really applicable to the said worthy, who had not even passed the meridian of life, but it is a term which seems invested with a latitude by no means acknowledged by Johnson or Walker. Thus, when Master Troublesome is at home for the holidays, his schoolfellow “old Bradshaw,” comes to spend a week with him; and the epithet, prefixed to

the rather obnoxious word "fellow," not only has no reference to longevity, but renders its adjunct perfectly unobjectionable, and forms a phrase of good-humoured familiarity.

"Old Orderly," who had missed the three truants from the refectory at dinner—for Courtenay's accident had prevented their appearance at that meal was certainly peering about in a very unpleasant manner, and Harry's heart beat very quickly when he first perceived him. The boy did not, however, stop, but went boldly up to the prefect.

It might be that Mr. Orderly was struck dumb at the unusual audacity of a boy confronting him while in the transgression of a stringent rule,—*flagrante delicto*—or, perhaps, he saw on Harry's countenance such unwonted seriousness, that he forbore to greet him with any of the phrases of ominous import with which he might otherwise have accosted the delinquent. He therefore allowed the boy to address him and detail the circumstances of the accident.

The prefect listened with anxious earnestness; all thought of the offence was lost in his horror

at the catastrophe, in thankfulness that the result of it had not been worse, and in reflection upon what was now to be done. The boy and his superior returned to the college together, and, apparently, on terms which excited the surprise of those who saw them, for Mr. Orderly's hand was resting gently, not judicially, on Harry's shoulder.

Happily, after some hours, poor Fred was able to be removed from the cottage to which Mr. Cardamon and his two schoolfellows had carried him; and few, indeed, were there among the many inmates of the college who did not, that night, breathe a heart-felt prayer of affectionate thanksgiving and joy that their companion and playmate had been preserved, and that they would not have cause to remember with sorrow the tragic consequences of that May holiday.

CHAPTER II.

“ Venez voir le plus beau spectacle que puisse presenter la terre,
Venez voir mourir le fidèle.”

CHATEAUBRIAND.

“ He was an orphan born to wealth, and then
Placed in the guardianship of cautious men.”

CRABBE.

It was not to be wondered at that Fred should feel very grateful to O'Neill for his preservation, from so great a danger as that from which he had been rescued. There were many among his acquaintance whom he liked better than Dermod, but now, with his characteristic vehemence and thoughtlessness, Courtenay made him at once his friend and his guide.

Dermod was not slow to profit by Fred's gratitude; while, on the one hand, he flattered

Courtenay's vanity, on the other he assumed an authority over him which, before this time, Fred would have resented; and, by making him believe that in all things he had his interest at heart, as much as when he risked his life for him, O'Neill succeeded in establishing an ascendancy over his companion, which was very likely to be permanent.

Thus passed some months.

It is fortunate that the modern writer is not shackled by the trammels of ancient rule. Between one chapter and the next a more or less time may have elapsed—turn over a page, and, swift as thought, the reader is transported to the Antipodes; no spirit is more subtle than the novelist; he needs no door to move from chamber to chamber—he is invisible and ubiquitous.

I will avail myself of these valuable privileges for the present, only so far as to beg my reader to accompany me to a more southern county.

Beside the deep dark waters of a broad and sluggish river, whose bed is encroached upon, in

many places, by thick masses of flags and bulrushes—meet haunt of the ravenous pike and the lazy chub—stood a large mansion. It was built in that style which is called Tudor, or more commonly Elizabethan.

The front was terminated on either side by a narrow wing, projecting just sufficiently to break the uniformity of the main building, but not enough to suggest the idea of an unfinished quadrangle. The principal entrance was in the centre of the front, thro' a porch or projection which, with the two wings, made the resemblance of the letter E, a form chosen by the architects of the time of Queen Elizabeth in compliment to their royal mistress.

The entire breadth of the wings was taken up with bay windows, which here, as in the body of the house, were carried up through the two stories of which it consisted. Their mullions and corners were composed of freestone, which formed an agreeable contrast with the brickwork of which the house was built, while the uniformity of the dead wall was relieved by the

insertion of bricks of a different colour, placed in lozenge-shaped outlines. Above the high pitched roof and gables rose the decorated and dissimilar chimneys, either singly, in pairs, or in stacks. It was a picturesque as well as an imposing edifice. The grounds no longer preserved the stiffness which characterised those of the period when the house was built. Terraces extended quite down to the water's edge; the prim yew hedges and accurately planted lines of trees had given place to flower beds and groups of evergreens; but so judiciously had the alteration been effected that all still harmonized sufficiently with the design and character of the house; while round, as well as inside the mansion, the comforts and elegancies of modern days had been introduced without any sacrifice of taste.

But the most striking appendage to the place was its glorious avenue. At a distance of about two hundred yards from the house rose two mighty elm trees, the giants of their race, spreading their gnarled limbs towards the mansion as if in guardianship. At an interval

sufficient to prevent mutual interference, others, scarcely less magnificent, reared their lofty heads, and thus they continued for upwards of three quarters of a mile, each a study in itself, and united, forming a sort of gigantic telescope of nature. And, as the eye wandered along this vista, it would rest at length upon a not inappropriate finish; for—it must have been by chance—at a distance of about four miles, directly in the centre of the avenue, rose high and distinct the heavenward-pointed spire of a Gothic church.

Gently swelling from each side of the river, the hills spread in graceful undulations, their sides presenting a verdant zone of meadows, studded with clumps of trees, their summits crowned with a changing diadem—a mass of beech woods, clothed, in the spring, with the softest green that nature wears; in the autumn, exhibiting the choicest tints and richest colours that her palette can produce.

Behind, and at a little distance from the house, was the parish church, once the property of the

family, and attached to the mansion; and its plain square tower formed a striking and massive feature in the picture. Altogether, there were few spots in our island which, for quiet and graceful beauty, and for the harmony which a union of still and pleasing objects forms, could surpass the realities of this charming scene.

The name of this house and domain was Lowick; its possessor was Sir Dugald Courtenay, the representative of one of the ancient Catholic families of England, and father of our schoolboy friend, Fred.

It was a calm autumnal day. The gossamer spider had been busy with its web; a swallow that had been left behind, was still wheeling about, and the "drowsy tinklings" of the flocks, folded on the hill side, sounded unusually distinct. If, on that day, you had been standing under one of the lofty pine trees in the woods at Lowick, you might have been startled by the ripe cones falling beside you; or, as you wandered among those silent labyrinths, you might have heard the beech masts opening Perchance,

in your walk, you might have encountered the agile squirrel returning to his nest, his jaws distended with a walnut, which was to swell his winter store-house; or you might have seen him, frightened from the ground, looking down at you from the forked bough or trunk of a tree, chattering his displeasure. You might have been tempted to stop for awhile to watch a single leaf, separated from the sapless branch, sinking, in obedience to a universal law, to the ground, all its softness gone, shrivelled, red, and sere. There was no gust of wind to shake it rudely from the branch before its time, but you might have watched it falling slowly, in a spiral eddy, to decay upon the dank earth with millions of its fellows which had accomplished their task of being, which had imparted their share of health and beauty to the tree, which had formed a curtain above the cradle of the nestling, and given shelter to the flock from the burning summer sun. Is not that leaf the type of an old man sinking into the grave? of the return of "dust to dust?"

On such a day it was that a carriage drove rapidly past the avenue and up to the hall door at Lowick. Inside it was Frederick Courtenay, who had been hastily summoned from college by the alarming intelligence of the dangerous illness of his father.

As he drove through the domain, he overtook and recognised more than one poor man bending his steps in the same direction; and, as he approached the house, he passed some groups, mostly of the cottagers and humbler tenants, assembled to hear tidings of their sick landlord. As they bowed or touched their hats to the occupant of the carriage, on each honest face there were marks of unfeigned seriousness and anxiety, for there was not one of his dependents who did not honour and esteem Sir Dugald Courtenay.

A message had just been sent to those outside the house that he was considerably worse, but that he was sensible, and thanked them all for their kind enquiries, and bade them all farewell.

But they seemed loath to depart; and some, as they slowly moved away, and others, as they

yet lingered near the house, recounted to each other the kindnesses and benefactions of him who was leaving them.

“Where would I have been,” said one, “if Sir Dugald had not helped me, when I was bond for Phil Amory, who ran away to America, and left me to pay the debt?”

“And was it not at the very last rent day,” said another, “that he forgave me half the rent of my cottage, because I had been unfortunate with my pig?”

“It was only last month,” observed a third, “that I heard him order a bottle of wine for widow Smith’s son, and ‘mind,’ said the good man to the butler, ‘give her some of the old port, it will be best for him.’ Ah, it will be a dark hour for us all that is his last.”

Thus affectionately and sadly were the humble enquirers employed, when the carriage drove up to the entrance door.

Fred was met by a very old and dear friend of his father’s.

“Frederick, my poor fellow,” he sobbed, as he

wrung the boy's hand, "Frederick, I fear that your father is very ill. Doctor —— (naming an eminent London physician) has been here, and he says that we must be prepared for the worst; indeed, Fred,"—and the old man could scarcely articulate,—“it would be wrong in me to conceal it from you—your father is dying.”

“Oh, Mr. Otley, is there no hope, no hope at all?”

“None, my poor boy, I fear. But I am so glad that you have arrived, for your father has often asked for you, and he desired that you should be immediately brought to his room; so come with me. You will find your dear father sadly altered; but compose yourself, Frederick, and do not give way to what I know you feel,” added Mr. Otley, for the boy's eyes were filled with tears, and he could not speak a word.

Within the chamber of death was a mournful and touching group. On the bed, propped up with pillows, was the sunken form of the dying man. All his faculties seemed absorbed in deep thought; his eyes were nearly closed, while

on his bloodless lips a slight motion was visible, as though he was engaged in earnest prayer. The step that would be noiseless, and the anxious whispers of those around were painfully distinct. At the head of the couch was the priest who had lately administered the last solemn rites of the Church; at the foot of it a grey-haired servant, who through many long years had served his master with fidelity and attachment, was on his knees, striving to stifle the sobs that burst from his bruised heart, and quench the tears that forced themselves through his hands clasped over his face.

At length the priest, who had remained for some time silently watching the countenance of the dying man, taking a book and kneeling down, commenced reciting the beautiful but solemn and awful prayers appointed to be read over the agonised. He too felt that he was losing a valued friend, and his voice trembled as he bade "the Christian soul go forth." Not another sound was to be heard when the room door was softly opened, and Sir Dugald's old friend entered with Fred.

The dying man turned his eyes to the door, and an unearthly smile played like a lambent flame round his blanched lips, while the faintest shade of colour flitted like a breath across the pallid cheek which it had forsaken.

“It is he! it is he!” stretching out his hands; “come to me,” and then clasping his child to his bosom, he faintly murmured: “once more to my arms, my darling boy; oh! may the God of Heaven bless you, my child, my dearest—” but his lips could not repeat the word of love; his arms relaxed their hold, his head sank back upon the pillow, and the priest began to recite the psalm *De Profundis*, for the soul that had passed away.

Poor Fred was very sad that evening; not once thought he of the title and possessions that were now his. Feelings, which he could not define, had arisen within him, and every now and then he had to rouse himself to be convinced that he was not dreaming.

When he retired to his room at night the reality of his grief forced itself rudely upon him. The

father, who had been so kind and indulgent, who had written such affectionate letters to him when absent, and had ever sought to give him pleasure and amusement when at home, was no more—lost to him for ever; he would never hear that fond voice again. Fred thought of the beautiful pony which his father had given him when he last came from college, and when he laid down his latest gift—a small gold watch—poor Fred could bear up no longer; he hid his face in his hands, though there was no one to see him, and sobbed aloud.

The excitement, which had hitherto kept him in a sort of waking dream, was over, and he was painfully alive to the re-action of his feelings.

But at length wearied out and exhausted, sleep came to his relief—sleep, the choicest gift of God to man; but even that was troubled, and he would start and toss himself, and wake and weep again, as he thought of the sad scene which he had witnessed.

The day which consigns the body to its kindred earth is, perhaps, more mournful than that

which returns the soul into the hands of its Maker.

On the latter there is wild and distracting grief—a frenzy of passion, which, from its very intensity, precludes reflection. In the interval there is consolation in gazing on the beloved features of the departed, the calmness of which is often a pleasing contrast to their so lately painful and agonised expression, and there is comfort in visiting the chamber of death, where its presence seems so little a reality that the voice is yet hushed to a whisper, and the foot-fall is light and soft, as if the slumber that has come at last could be disturbed.

But when the hour of final separation comes, the chain that binds the living to the dead seems to grow stronger and stronger, and, when the links are broken by a last removal, a sickening blow seems given to the heart, desolation is spread over it, and a blank, dreary, dismal future is all that opens to the view.

It was indeed a mournful day when the bell tolled for the last short journey of Sir Dugald Courtenay.

Within the church, behind the house, was an aisle, dedicated entirely to the tombs and monuments of some of the long line of his ancestors, and beneath it was to rest their last, but not least worthy, descendant.

The church was crowded with neighbours, tenants, and dependents, and many a tearful eye gazed sadly down as the remains of him whom all honored, and many loved, were lowered into the vault.

When all was over, the crowd dispersed, and left poor Fred and his father's old friend, Mr. Otley, kneeling in prayer within the silent aisle.

When Sir Dugald's will was opened, it was found that he had left the guardianship of his son to his "long proved and valued friend, John Otley."

That Sir Dugald had been a good steward to the estate, every one knew, but it was not supposed that he had saved so large a sum as it was now found would eventually come to the yet youthful baronet. It was, however, remembered that he had, now and then,

jokingly observed that "the perfection of property was a fine estate in land, with plenty of money in the funds to keep it up with." But there had been no parsimony in his saving, no meanness in his economy. He did not disparage the advantages of birth and fortune, and, during the few years that Lady Courtenay lived (for he married late in life and was soon left a widower), his establishment was appropriate and handsome. But a change came over him at her death. Society had lost its charms. Henceforth he led a retired and unostentatious life; and thus riches were accumulated for his only child, the chief object of his thoughts and hopes. He lived

"Not as a miser, but in pure good taste,
That scorn'd the idle wantonness of waste."

A few weeks after Sir Dugald's funeral, Mr. Otley proposed that the young Baronet should resume his studies at College.

Fred was quite willing to do so, for altho' he still felt deeply the loss of his loving father—it is only in the nature of a boy's elastic spirits

soon to rise, however low they may have been depressed; and, altho' Fred found in Mr. Otley all that was kind and considerate, he nevertheless began to think that he should be glad to mix again with companions of his own age, and converse with Montague and O'Neill respecting all that he had seen and felt.

So Fred returned to College.

CHAPTER III.

"You are certainly a lucky fellow," said Dermot O'Neill one day to Courtenay, two or three months after his return to college; "it is not often that a young fellow like you comes into such a fine fortune as you have got."

"What! Dermot," replied Fred, "can you call me lucky, when I have lost my father, merely because I have got more money than I shall ever know what to do with?" and the tears started to his eyes.

"Well," rejoined O'Neill, "you will some day think differently. I only wish I had a chance of ever being half as rich as you will be. But in Ireland money seems to have vanished unaccountably, to be swallowed up, as our forests

have been in the bogs. Things seem to get worse and worse, and I suppose I shall at last have to work for my bread."

"Never, as long as I live," exclaimed Fred, warmly; "promise me, Dermod, that you will let me know if ever you require a helping hand."

"Thank you, thank you, Fred."

"No thanks, Dermod. Do I not owe you more gratitude than I can ever pay? Besides, I am sure I shall have more money than I can spend; so that's a bargain. And now come along, I want a new bat, and so do you, and I will give you the best that old Spokeshave has in his shop."

As the two youths proceeded to the carpenter's shop Fred took a letter out of his pocket, and unfolding the neatly and very closely written pages—

"See, Dermod," said he, "what a despatch I have had from Mr. Otley this morning."

"What on earth is it all about?" asked O'Neill.

"These two first pages are all about Homer and

Virgil, chiefly a comparison of some of the verses of both in the books we have been lately reading, and an explanation why he thinks Dacier is wrong about that very passage we had to construe yesterday."

"Oh! is that all?"

"No; in this last page there are a few lines about Lowick, and the rent day, which was last week. Shall I read you the letter?"

"Well, no, not the first part at least (I dare say my reader thinks Dermot was right); but what does he say at the end about the rents?"

"Oh! not much; he is sorry the rent day was not so good as he expected it to be. There has been a failure of the turnips, and a good deal of disease among the sheep, so he tells me he has had to make a considerable return to the tenants."

"Depend upon it, Fred," said O'Neill, "the failure and disease are only excuses of the tenants not to pay their rents. You know what a grumbling set they are, at least I know. They are taking advantage of your having just come into possession, and, if I were you, I would not

be humbugged by any such nonsense. But in a few years you will be your own master, and then, I suppose, you will judge and act for yourself."

Fred had felt sure that Mr. Otley would do all that was right; and yet O'Neill's assumption of superior experience and knowledge, and his off-hand, confident way of deciding a point, had taken but too strong a hold of his mind, and he made no reply.

I spared my readers the infliction of Mr. Otley's erudite and critical letter, but Fred's guardian deserves some lines of notice.

Briefly then, John Otley had been a book-worm—I say had been, for he was now something more.

Intellect had been the divinity he worshipped; knowledge, the El Dorado of his aspirations; books, the only society he desired. A sage in the wisdom and lore of books, he was a child in the ways of life; familiar, for instance, with the nature of the *talus* or *tessera*, he had scarcely heard of the dice box or roulette table; an enthusiast, great as Pindar was, in the Olympic or

Isthmian games, the glories of Epsom, Ascot, or Newmarket were nought to him. Like Menippus in Lucian's *Episcopaentes*, he had needed some one to open his ears to the hive-like hum of busy mortals, and his eyes to all their follies and vices, their tricks and chicaneries. He was a very *hellao librorum*.

It was in the long nights and tedious days of convalescence, after a dangerous illness, that the retrospect of his past years forced upon him the question—*Cui bono?*

He left his sick room an altered man. His very house partook of the change, and great, no doubt, was the tumult among the spiders, which might well arrogate the same prescriptive right to his mansion as those which had woven their webs among the folios of his prototype, Magliabechi.

He entered upon a course of active benevolence; and freely—for he was blest with an ample independence—shared with the poor the contents of his purse, and, with those who solicited his counsel, the treasures of his wonderful mind.

Nor were these last few. For, not to speak of the educated, among whom he was called a living cyclopædia, the ruder and poorer sought his advice, and referred their differences to him with something of the awe and veneration with which the ancients approached their oracles. He was no friend to the lawyers, and it was with him, as Pope sings of the Man of Ross—

“Is there a variance? Enter but his door,
Balk’d are the courts, and contest is no more.”

He was changed in all things save one: John Otley never become Benedict, the married man.

Such was Fred’s guardian.

Time flew on with rapid wing. Fred’s vacations were always passed at home, and, during them, Mr. Otley left his own house to remain at Lowick. Most carefully, indeed, did he in every particular fulfil the charge intrusted to him by his departed friend.

Montague, I have said, was Courtenay’s cousin. By a somewhat strange disposition, it was

settled in the entail of the Lowick estates, that, should their present possessor die without direct heirs, they should devolve upon Harry Montague, passing over his elder brother.

His chance of inheriting the property was, however, very small, for Fred's health was excellent.

Strange partialities and dislikes sometimes exist in families. With or without a cause, Harry was not a favourite with his father, who perhaps, too, on account of the contingent interest which his son had in his cousin's estates, was prevailed upon, without much difficulty, to let Harry keep his friend and schoolmate company at Lowick, during their vacations.

O'Neill had left college, but Fred and he kept up a frequent correspondence. Dermot was now his own master, idle and without occupation, for he had shown no inclination for the army, the only profession which his father did not think beneath the dignity of the son of him who possessed the broad lands (mortgaged though they were) and castle of Iverah.

The day presently came when Dermod's companions, Courtenay and Montague, also bade adieu to Alma Mater, each having achieved more than average distinction.

I rather think that Fred now considered that he was qualified at once to take a leading part upon the world's great stage, and fancied, as certain youths of far more moderate acquirements have been known to declare, that he was leaving college for the simple reason that he had learnt all that could be taught there.

This very considerable folly Mr. Otley took instant measures to put an end to; and, Fred's self-sufficiency having received a very severe and wholesome check, he became aware that he had still a good deal to learn; and many a time, in after years, in those days which I may briefly sketch ere my pen is laid by, he remembered how much he owed to those studies which, guided by the best master he had ever had, he now pursued.

"But Mr. Author," says a "fast" young gentleman of my acquaintance, who has already

voted my tale exceedingly dull, "you will make your hero a regular muff, shutting him up with an old book-worm."

"My dear Mr. Prigge, do not be impatient, Fred will not turn out a muff, and you will find that, although he can laugh with Lucian, and quite enter into the spirit of Juvenal, Persius, and Horace, when they lash the vices and follies of the 'fast' men of this day, he is not thereby precluded from the perusal of your class books, 'Bell's Life in London,' and the 'Sporting Magazine.'"

The stables and kennels at Lowick were by no means empty, for Fred was passionately fond of field sports, and Mr. Otley only sought to moderate, not to extinguish, his ardour; and the "old book-worm" quite entered into Fred's enthusiasm as he recounted how well the grey horse had carried him from Oakum Spinney, where the fox was found, to Newton copse, where he was run to ground: "the most brilliant thing, sir, they have had for years;" and a few months later was almost equally excited with Fred, as he watched

the young sportsman hook and play, and land a trout of immense size, "fourteen pounds, sir, if he is an ounce," after a good half hour's contest in the deep mill-pool behind the church.

But Mr. Otley had no intention to allow the young man to remain entirely at Lowick. He had already proposed to Fred that he should pass a year or two in travelling, and, recurring to the subject, said to him one day, "Fred, I have mentioned my project to your friend Montague's father, and he is quite willing that Harry should be your companion."

"Thank you," replied Fred, "I could not have desired anything better."

"Mr. Montague makes one stipulation however."

"What is that?"

"That you go by yourselves, and fight your own battles together, as you have often enough done already."

"Depend upon it we shall get on famously. And what time have you fixed for our departure?"

"It will probably be in a few months, it de-

pend upon your cousin's arrangements with the lawyer he is with. During that time you must be content with less sporting and amusement. Bacon says, Fred," (there's the bookworm, Prigge) "he that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school and not to travel."

"You shall have no cause to complain," said Fred, "I'll not cross a saddle, nor spin another minnow."

"No extremes, Fred: and I hope you will both return safe and well, tho' you remember Hesiod's line, (there again, Prigge,): — "Πλείη μὲδ γὰρ γαῖα Κακῶν, Πλείηδὲ θάλασσα," and that your old friend will not be laid low before he welcomes you back again.

I dare say my young *blazé* acquaintance Prigge will laugh when I say that Fred's eyes almost revealed the emotion he felt, as he very warmly thanked the old man for all his kindness.

And Fred went to work manfully, and studied hard, and his horses and dogs led an easy, indo-

lent life. Thus the interval went by even more quickly than usually sped the months.

Montague came to Lowick, and Fred and he read together till the day of their departure arrived.

You may be sure that Mr. Otley supplied them with a good stock of advice, ethical and classical, but when the carriage drove to the door, he could only shake Harry's hand warmly, and press Fred's yet more closely, while he faltered out few words besides an affectionate "God bless you! God bless you, my boy."

The two companions now trimmed their sails for their first voyage, (figuratively, Prigge) and launched their boat on the broad billows of life's fitful ocean.

Despite the natural excitement thus felt, Fred, in particular, was unfeignedly sorry to leave home. But it was not likely that the pleasure which they anticipated and the curiosity of youth should leave them much time for regret, and their spirits quickly rose, and they gaily talked of their plans for the future.

For the present we will bid adieu to Fred and Harry, and leave them to gain a little experience in the ways of the world, which, as Byron says—

“Is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.”

CHAPTER IV.

“Use wiles for wit, and make deceit a pleasure,
Call craft counsel.”

SIR THOS. WYATT.

“When lovers meet, 'tis to the mind
The spring flush of the blooming year.
But oh ! their parting——”

HOGG.

ALTHOUGH Dermot O'Neill had not been required by his father to embrace any profession, he was not an eldest son.

Some time after Mr. O'Neill came into possession of his estates, he married a lady noble in blood and name, and beautiful and good as she was noble.

But it is, alas ! too frequently the case that

beauty conceals disease, as the petals of the rose-bud hide the canker that consumes it, and the delicate flush on the almost transparent cheek of Lady Alice soon deepened into a hectic spot.

But when her meek suffering spirit passed away, she left behind her an infant in whose undeveloped features might be traced the semblance of his lost mother's loveliness.

For a time, grief held full sway over the widower; but Iveragh was lonely, and, ere the wild flower had twice bloomed beside the church which contained the tomb of his youthful wife, the bells above it rang their merry peal, and the dance, the feast, and the bonfire proclaimed the arrival of a second bride in the lately desolate mansion.

Short had been the time granted to Lady Alice O'Neill as mistress of her husband's castle: but she had not failed to gain the affections of all by her condescension, her kindness, and her charity; and her memory was still preserved as that of a good spirit which had visited the earth for awhile, to soothe the poor man's care and the orphan's loneliness.

"'Tis a long day till we see the likes of her again," were words often spoken: and when Mr. O'Neill brought home his second bride, her manner and demeanour were very unlikely to efface the remembrance of his first. Her deportment was cold and haughty, and an overweening sense of her own importance, and an imperiousness towards her dependants contrasted ill with the mildness, graciousness, affability, and self-forgetfulness of her predecessor.

Dermot was her son.

The name of his elder brother was Charles. He grew tall and handsome, and while his features reflected his mother's beauty, he appeared, at first, to have inherited the delicate nature which had deprived him so early of her fostering care.

There existed but little cordiality between the brothers in their boyhood, and it diminished rather than increased as they grew older.

Mrs. O'Neill had not the good sense to conceal the natural preference which she felt for her own son, and the elder brother was made to yield to

the younger, who quickly became the most odious of creatures—a spoiled child.

While every action of Charles denoted a disposition generous, open, and confiding to a fault, the sly and secret subterfuge, the plausible excuse, and the ready lie, indicated plainly his brother's character.

His mother, with a mistaken fondness, would not part with her boy, violent and headstrong though he was, till long indulgence had made him unbearable, and his father now insisted upon his leaving home and his being sent to college.

Charles had evinced a decided passion for a military life, and he had been some years in the army when Dermot returned from college. The two brothers then met again, and Charles at least endeavoured to forget their early mutual antipathy. After a time, he left Iveragh to rejoin his regiment, which had been ordered to a town in the south of Ireland.

Charles now generally addressed his letters to his brother, for his step-mother had behaved towards him with too little fairness to gain his

confidence, and his father's dictatorial precision and coldness made his son consider him rather as a superior than a friend and parent. Absence, too, had somewhat lessened the jealousy and want of cordiality between the two brothers, and they were now tolerably good friends—at a distance.

About four miles from the town where Charles O'Neill was quartered, was a small village, beautiful and romantic in its situation. Here, on as sweet a spot as nature ever gave to be the abode of man, dwelt a father and his two daughters. They had once been rich, but their entire property was in one of the West Indian islands, and had suffered an enormous depreciation in value. Their name was Fitzpatrick; their dwelling was called Charleville Cottage. Fanny, the younger sister, was a lovely girl; she had been cast in a mould of faultless form, and her every movement was graceful, and each attitude was a model. She was her father's pride, her sister's idol.

It was by chance that Charles O'Neill first met

Fanny Fitzpatrick. His heart—to which, as it often happens, Cupid had gained access by first taking possession *coup de main* of the watch towers, the eyes—was fairly won, and he failed not rapidly to increase the intimacy which chance had begun. How swiftly flew the hours and the days, the weeks too, of the dreamy existence of the lovers—for such they ere long became—the future unheeded, the present only in their thoughts, while they fondly dreamed that all was happiness around them, and never imagined that any cloud would darken the sunshine of their thoughtless love.

In his letters to his brother, Charles had spoken with rapture of Fanny Fitzpatrick, and when he last wrote had acknowledged his engagement to her, and he begged Dermot, as a brother and friend, to advise him how to act so as to propitiate his father.

The very next post brought the following letter from Dermot :—

“ Iveragh Castle.

“ MY DEAR CHARLES,

“ I lose no time in answering your letter, and, as the post gives us so little law, you must excuse my being very brief.

“ Accept my warmest congratulations on the success of your suit. How much I should like to see your fair Fanny, and let my own eyes convince me that yours have not drawn a flattered portrait of her beauty. You will give me credit I know, for wishing you many years of happiness together.

“ But I am forgetting that you are no exception to the adage about true love and its course.

“ My father is, I assure you, very hard to deal with just now; I believe he is at his wit's end sometimes for a two pound note, and I overheard him say, the other day, that he had a mind to send away the second footman and part with his carriage horses. I don't believe he will though. He has had a regular flare up with old McGrath about some right of way. McGrath got the best of it at the assizes, and the governor

had to pay costs, so you may be sure he is not in the sweetest of tempers. Do not you think it would be bad policy to say anything to him just now about your marriage? You know Susan Waller is growing up (at least the governor thinks so) on purpose for you. By the way, I saw her the other day, and I cannot say I think she would ever make you a handsome wife. Some ill-natured person has given her the sobriquet of "the little lumper," because she is so dumpy and short, so like our national esculent. It does not matter telling you this now. How unlike your beauty!

"Perhaps, therefore, you may consider that it will only exasperate the governor to say anything about your marriage. Of course you would not listen to me if I were to advise you to be off your engagement.

"But what are you to do, if this is not to be thought of, for I suppose your regiment was only ordered south preparatory to foreign service. One sometimes hears of a son not marrying quite according to his father's views, and yet all comes

right at last, especially if the daughter-in-law is pretty and has winning ways. I heard of some one not very long ago, who married a girl without saying a word to his governor. She had not a sixpence, moreover. Well, of course there was a tremendous row when the news came; and the old gentleman fumed and stormed and—wrote to ask them to come down to the country, and spend the winter with him! You are now as well aware as I am, how matters are here, and you must act as you think best. May I send a brother elect's love to your fair Fanny? Of course I shall be anxious to know what course you adopt. Meanwhile, believe me, dear Charles,

“Your affectionate brother,

“DERMOD.”

Just as Dermot had finished his letter, Mrs. O'Neill came into the room.

“Dermot,” she said, “have you seen anything of that deed your father received yesterday? He has lost or mislaid it, and—”

“Is not very amiable just now, eh mother?” interposed the son. “But stop one moment.

Are you quite sure that only a part of the property is entailed on Charles?"

"Yes, boy, only Iveragh and a portion of the estates are settled; but it makes no difference, Mr. O'Neill will not divide the property. I have told you that before. Why do you ask?"

"Oh! I forgot, but there is my father calling you."

Mr. Fitzpatrick was an indulgent, easy, inert man, and his partiality for Charles O'Neill and the knowledge that he would be the representative of one of the oldest families and the possessor of one of the finest places in Ireland, got the better of his prudence and the justice due to Mr. O'Neill. Poverty and reverses are very apt to detract from a man's independence of feeling; love, too, is persuasive; and Mr. Fitzpatrick stilled his scruples by saying that he must manage to spare something for Charles and his wife till some arrangement should be made with Mr. O'Neill, who would never be so unreasonable as not to receive the couple, when all opposition to his son's wishes would be useless.

Yet Charles could not conceal from himself the necessity that sooner or later he must make known to his father the attachment which he had formed. But he delayed doing so from day to day, for he knew that his father had other prospects in view for him, and that he was expected in due time to retrieve the fallen fortunes of his house by a union with an heiress whom, in spite of her wealth, he could not admire.

So Charles and Fanny were married; but ere the young officer bore his lovely bride from her home, he wrote to his father, acknowledging the step he had taken, and giving such a glowing, and, it must be admitted, such a just description of his wife's beauty and good qualities, that he flattered himself he had secured a kind and forgiving reply.

Great indeed were his surprise and horror when a few days afterwards Charles received a letter containing—not according to the imaginary precedent Dermot had so artfully introduced in his communication with his brother, words of forgiveness and affection—but a father's curse, and

a prohibition, ever to enter the gates of Iveragh.

Much as they were horrified, and deeply as they felt the consequence of their imprudence, the lovers were too happy in their mutual, truthful, ardent affection, to allow other thoughts to intrude for any lengthened time on their present heedless existence, or their future ideal world of joy.

"The storm will blow over, depend upon it dearest," said Charles.

"Oh! but that dreadful curse," replied his wife: "I never thought that anything so shocking as that would happen."

"Do not think of it, Fanny. My father is an impetuous man, he has many things to harass and vex him; by this time, perhaps, he may be sorry that he sent that letter."

"God grant that it may be so, Charles."

"Remember also, dearest, that Dermot is on the spot. He will have many opportunities of speaking a word for us. Some day—not quite immediately, perhaps, but soon I hope—we shall

have a letter to tell us that we are forgiven, and bidding us to lose no time, but to go at once to Iveragh."

"Oh! how I wish it would come—how happy it would make me!"

"And how proud I shall be! You will have to make acquaintance with, and be stared at by all the tenants, Fanny. We must wait a little, and all will come right."

They indeed waited, but in vain, for the wished-for letter: the proximity of Fanny's home, however, made Charles and his wife reflect less that his was closed to them.

But sickness and misfortune were gathering over the inmates of Charleville Cottage, and the house which, even amid denials and reverses, had been wont to ring with the merry laugh and the sound of music and song, was to be changed into the abode of death and the place of mourning.

Fanny's sister was seized with a malignant fever, which in a few days consigned her to the grave.

How often it is that misfortunes come "in troops." While Mr. Fitzpatrick was yet sorrowing in the first burst of his grief for the loss of his daughter, he received intelligence that his agent in the West Indies had absconded, and, it was feared, had embezzled his employer's property to a considerable amount. His correspondent, moreover, assured Mr. Fitzpatrick that his presence on the spot was absolutely necessary, and urged him to leave Ireland immediately.

This intelligence, coming so quickly after those sad days of anguish which succeeded the death of his child, added despondency to the father's grief; and, at first, Mr. Fitzpatrick felt but little inclined to make any exertion towards retrieving his shattered fortunes.

He thought that he might still reckon upon sufficient to maintain himself in humble independence, for his dear Teresa was beyond the reach of worldly wants, and Fanny—but, alas! it had never before appeared in its stern reality that Fanny was the wife of one exiled on her account from his father's house, and dependent upon himself.

This thought roused him from his apathy, and determined him to act upon the advice which he had received.

In a few weeks, Charleville Cottage was disposed of; a sad farewell had been breathed between Fanny O'Neill and her heart-broken father, and where lately she trod the happiest of brides, the most prized of daughters, the most loved of sisters, she now stood—even in the presence of her adored and adoring husband—a forlorn and desolate being.

A very short time after these melancholy occurrences, orders were received for the immediate embarkation of Charles' regiment for foreign service.

It was necessary that he and his wife should part, for Fanny was about to become a mother.

Among the many subjects which, in the few days preceding his departure, Charles and Fanny thought and talked of with full hearts and eyes, were the chances of a reconciliation with Mr. O'Neill.

Dermod had written to his brother a fearful

account of his father's anger and rage upon the receipt of the letter announcing Charles's marriage. There was no need for him to exaggerate them, for they were all that the uncurbed but outraged pride of a thwarted, indignant, and violent man could produce; and though Dermod's motive might not have been his brother's interest, his advice was, perhaps, not injudicious, when he assured Charles that he would only exasperate his father still more by writing again.

All that Charles therefore did, was to inform his brother that he was ordered abroad, and he left it entirely to Dermod's judgment to show his letter to his father or not.

"How can I leave you, my Fanny," said Charles to his wife, as they sat together in the small lodging which he had engaged, "how can I ever leave you?"

"It will not be long, Charles, and the thought of our meeting will encourage me to bear our separation. It is you, I think, who want cheering," she added, with a faint smile.

"I do indeed. I feel as if I was forsaking

you, but you know that there is no alternative; and yet you have not a relative who will watch and care for you while I am away."

"I have not one indeed: my father is gone, and poor Teresa—oh! Charles, how little did we think only a few months ago how sad we should so soon be."

And, indeed, poor Fanny did look very sad, and her dark mourning dress made her pale cheek appear still paler.

The remembrance of her father and sister brought tears into her eyes, and she laid her mild calm face on her husband's shoulder and wept.

Suddenly, she raised herself, "Charles," she exclaimed, with animation, "a thought has come into my mind, and I will try if my plan will succeed: yes, you must let me try."

"What is it, dearest?"

"It is, that after you are gone, I will—you know I am to go to Dublin—I will stop at Iveragh."

"Iveragh!"

"Yes, and see your father."

“But Iveragh is not on your way to Dublin, quite the contrary.”

“No matter, I will go to Iveragh. I will throw myself at your father’s feet—I will beseech him to forgive us—affection will plead for me, love will be my prompter, and he will not, no, he cannot shut his eyes to my grief and loneliness.”

“No, no! dearest, it cannot be, for if—”

“Well, we shall not even then be worse off than we are now. But he will not, he cannot remain thus hard and implacable to us. I shall write to you, Charles, and tell you of my success. Oh! it will be joy—joy indeed.”

CHAPTER V.

"Show me a man who cares no more for one place than another and I will show you, in the same person, one who loves nothing but himself. Beware of those who are harmless by choice. You have no hold on a human being whose affections are without a top root."

SOUTHEY.

"I will not hear her speak ; away with her."

SHAKESPEARE.

TIME hung heavily on Dermot O'Neill's hand; he had long found Iveragh anything but a pleasant home.

His mother, thinking to turn to her child's advantage his brother's marriage and his father's consequent resentment, had ventured to urge Mr. O'Neill to settle upon Dermot that portion of his property which was not entailed on Charles. But

there were gentle influences within the heart of that stern, proud father that she dreamt not of, and the memory of his first and only love interposed, and with warmth and displeasure he forbade the subject to be mentioned.

From that time Dermod and his father seemed to become less at ease with each other, and less cordial. Thus Dermod, who stood in awe of his father, found few attractions within the Castle, while his unpopularity with the tenants and his continual bickering and disputes with them, caused him much mortification, and deprived him of many amusements beyond its walls.

He was, therefore, fain often to take refuge in his mother's apartments, and in the privacy of her chamber was established the confidence—such as it was—of mother and son, a confidence nurtured by the scheming heartlessness of the one, pandering to the absorbing selfishness of the other.

“Mother,” said Dermod, one day, entering Mrs. O'Neill's apartment, “have you spoken to my father about my leaving?”

"Yes, I have; and he consents to your doing so. But what makes you so pale, Dermod? are you ill?"

"No, I am quite well. I am very glad my father will give me leave of absence. I do not often get away, and I am tired of this place, and sick to death of these never-ending disputes with tenants and creditors?"

"I am sure I am so likewise, Dermod."

"And what attraction has this dull, grim old castle for me? What is it to me? It will never be mine; and, after all, what interest have I in one place more than another? One of these days we shall all have to turn out, I expect, for my father's affairs seem getting worse and worse."

"Then the rents must be raised."

"That would be difficult, I suspect."

"Well, never mind them, but look here, boy," added Mrs. O'Neill, taking a newspaper from a drawer, "here is an announcement that Charles' regiment—a detachment of it, at least—has sailed. The names of the officers are not given, and Charles may not be among them, but I took

the paper away from the study in case you father has not already seen the notice."

"Why so, mother?"

"Because if Charles has been left, your father, knowing he would have to follow, might take a fancy to see him or write to him before his departure."

"And yet—"

"What?"

"Simply that I do not think any body would give much for my chance of possessing Iveragh. Charles may have a son, even though he has sailed and may never return to Ireland."

"You seem in bad spirits, Dermot. Do tell me what is the matter. You do not look yourself to-day."

"Nothing, mother, except that I have had some high words with young McGrath. You know I got him convicted last year for poaching. The evidence was certainly not very strong, but if he was not guilty his imprisonment would serve as a warning."

"And what has the impudent fellow been saying to you?"

“I met him in the plantation near his father’s farm, and I taxed him with being there for the same purpose. He said he had been driving out some sheep that had strayed from the field. He was very impudent; and, at last, he shook his fist at me, and threatened me with such fierce words that really I should not dare to prosecute him as I threatened; I should not even like to meet him alone;” and Dermod’s cheek grew pale as he thought of the menaces of the stout young farmer. “I wish,” he added, “that you would prevail on my father to get rid of those McGraths.”

“Well, my boy, if we can find any plea for their ejection.”

“That may be found, surely, Besides, I know my father bears them no good-will; he has not forgotten the decision old McGrath got about the right of way, and the heavy costs.”

“Well, Dermod, they shall be got rid of, if possible.”

“Thank you, mother, do not forget them.”

The young villain’s eyes glistened with delight at the revenge, and the hope of being relieved

from his fears; and he left his mother's apartments with a lightened heart.

The day before that which Dermod had fixed for his departure from Iveragh, he received a summons to join his father in his study.

Mr. O'Neill was now between fifty and sixty years of age. His frame was still powerful, and his countenance handsome, but those who knew him in his youth, and in those days of mirth and gallantry which preceded his first marriage, were wont to say that latter years had wrought a great and visible change in him beyond what the advance of age would warrant. Under any circumstance, his black hair might have become grizzled, and perhaps his grey eye might not beam with its former quickness, but the surface of his brow was seamed with lines which sometimes, it is said, tell of long and painful thought; and upon his face, particularly beneath his eyes, and converging to the corners of his mouth, were marks deeply furrowed, which gave him the appearance of a much older man than he was.

The rumour was rife that Mr. O'Neill's second marriage was not so happy as the first had been.

With some of his acquaintances this fully accounted for any change they saw in him; while those who had any suspicion of the circumstances of his eldest son's marriage, attributed much to the annoyance and irritation which it had produced. Each cause might have had its share: certain it is that the cloud upon his brow became darker as Mr. O'Neill grew older, and far from transferring to Dermot the affection which, in appearance at least, he withheld from his offending child, he treated him, as well as his mother, with a coldness and reserve that were frequently noticed and commented on.

Mr. O'Neill was seated at his bureau when Dermot entered his study. As he heard his son approach and touch the door, he hastily put on one side an object which he had been gazing upon with long and deep attention. It was a miniature of his deceased wife.

Perhaps he was wrong in allowing himself to indulge his mind in a melancholy retrospect:

“ But who shall school the heart's affections ? ”

And long ere this date Mr. O'Neill found

himself day by day less able to resist making a comparison between the present and his former married life, and more closely guarding the memory of the budding hopes of his youth, and the bliss of his happiest days.

"So you leave to-morrow, Dermod," said his father, "you have not been long in making your preparations, but no doubt you are anxious to have a little more society than you meet with here."

"Indeed, I do not desire much society," replied Dermod, "at the same time, I shall be glad to see a little of the world. My mother tells me you have received an answer from my uncle, to whom you wished me to pay my first visit."

"Yes, he will be glad to see you. I do not think, however, that you will meet much company at his house; it is situated in a very retired part of the country. However, you will go south when you leave your uncle's, and so to England, but, hark ye, Dermod," and though his voice grew sterner, signs of uneasiness, if not of actual emotion, were visible in Mr. O'Neill's manner and countenance, "you must have no personal communication with your brother."

"Your wishes," replied Dermod, "are sufficient."

"But tell me," continued the father, with something more than curiosity in his manner; "you were accustomed, at one time, to correspond frequently with Charles; when did you hear last from him?"

Now it was but a short time before this, and immediately upon receiving orders to embark, that Charles had written to his brother.

"Indeed," replied Dermod, "I hardly know. When Charles first went to the South I often heard from him; but I suppose he found his time otherwise occupied, for gradually our correspondence slackened, and I really do not think he has written twice since we first heard of ——"

"Well, well," said Mr. O'Neill, interrupting him, with symptoms of vexation as well as impatience, "I trust you will enjoy yourself, Dermod; take this pocket-book, there is money in it; enough to last you some months. I can neither provide for you now as well as I could wish, nor make you liberal promises for the future; for

there are heavy encumbrances on the property, as you know."

Dermod received the gift with the expression of his thanks. There is no doubt that the father would have been glad to glean some intelligence of the child of her whose pictured form he had been contemplating; for it was rather his pride that was offended than his affection that was diminished—but this pride forbade more open and direct inquiries, and it stopped the allusion to Charles's marriage which Dermod was artfully introducing.

Charles O'Neill had torn himself from the fainting form of his wife, and was far away from her.

With the fond hope of winning the pardon of her husband's father, she set out a few days after he had sailed—alone, unprotected, unaided, poor—determining that her future plans should be regulated by the reception she should meet with at Iveragh.

Dermod had taken leave of his father, and

had his hand almost on the handle of the door, when it was opened, and before the servant could announce the arrival of a stranger, a lady stepped quickly past him and Dermod, and, raising for a moment to the latter her agitated eyes, sank down on her knees at the feet of Mr. O'Neill. With her hands clasped before her heaving bosom, and her eyes at first raised with searching earnestness, then lowered with modest bashfulness, Charles' wife had knelt humbly down. The act of falling on her knees had displaced her bonnet, the strings of which she had loosened from her throat—for the agitation she experienced from the immediate prospect of the dreaded yet longed-for interview had amounted almost to suffocation. Her luxuriant hair was scattered in disorder about her neck and shoulders, and her animated features were fully visible to Dermod, whose curiosity riveted him to the spot, and who now gazed, with a sordid and malignant interest, on the being whose destiny he had attempted, but too successfully, to cloud.

"Pardon us!" she exclaimed, in broken accents. "Pardon us, Mr. O'Neill—I dare not call you father. We have erred, yet forgive us. Your child is far away from you and me, and may never see you more. Oh! give me the right to bear to him the pardon which he so ardently desires, and which I now humbly crave." She paused for an instant, and looked imploringly into Mr. O'Neill's countenance.

There was no reply.

"If the fault," she continued, "be too great for your forgiveness, on me alone inflict your anger. By the memory of your early love—for the sake of her, the mother of your son, who sees me pleading for him, I conjure you to take him once again back to your heart. Oh! withhold not any longer a father's love, a father's pardon."

Still Mr. O'Neill was silent, but he moved restlessly. She fondly misinterpreted his silence.

"You will; you will! you do forgive us," she exclaimed, almost wildly. "Oh! blessings on you."

“Madam,” said Mr. O’Neill, interrupting her, and speaking in a stern voice, from which, however, emotion was not absent, “your words leave me to presume that you come hither as the wife of a disobedient son.”

“I am indeed his wife, his unhappy wife; but—”

“Then rise, madam, this is not your place. When my son committed that act of disrespect to his father which has given you the fancied right of appearing here on his behalf, I swore that in my life time neither he nor his should ever rest beneath my roof. Go, madam, you have your answer.”

“For pity’s sake, hear me, I conjure you; recall the curse you have invoked upon your child. Be merciful as you would hope for mercy. The son you have cursed is the child of your early love, your first-born.”

A struggle was visible in the compressed features of Mr. O’Neill. It was but for an instant. Rising, he said, “You should not have been admitted; I will hear no more. Go, ere I ring for my servants.”

Vain were poor Fanny's supplications, vain her adjurations, her tears. A frown was on the harsh man's brow, his lips spoke not again; and even while the beautiful petitioner persisted in her entreaties—not so much for herself as for that stern father's son—Mr. O'Neill summoned the domestics, who compelled her to quit the room.

But ere she reached the outer door, her self-possession returned, her innate dignity was restored; she shook off the rude hands that had been laid upon her, and walked proudly forth.

The vehicle which had brought her from the nearest village was still at the gate. She stepped into it, and the sneering voice of one of the menials bade the driver return whence he had come.

Overwhelmed with the rudeness and indignity with which she had been treated, Fanny sank back, and, with her hands over her face, relieved her full heart by a passionate burst of tears.

“Oh! Charles,” she cried aloud, “what have I not suffered for you! better a life time of

poverty and distress than the repetition of such an hour as the last."

To collect her thoughts or quiet her heart's emotions was impossible. One determination only was pre-eminent, to retire as soon as possible from the precincts of those walls whence she had been thrust by menial hands, and endure every thing rather than return thither.

She had but just alighted, late in the evening at the inn where she had procured the carriage when the sound of a horn announced the arrival of a public conveyance. It was a vehicle of very primitive appearance, which was accustomed at intervals to perform a slow unpunctual journey along some cross roads of an unfrequented district.

Fanny hastily enquired what was its destination, and asked if she should be enabled, by taking a place in it, to join the high road to Dublin.

After some consultation, she was advised to travel by it to a certain point; there she might procure a car, which would transport her across the hills to the junction with the high road.

Glad of an opportunity of escaping from a neighbourhood now so hateful, fatigued though she really was, yet in that state of excitement which made her careless whither she was borne so that she was in motion, Fanny willingly took her place, and the vehicle started.

Let us return to Iveragh for awhile. It must not be supposed that Mr. O'Neill was unmoved, when he beheld at his feet, in her surpassing loveliness, the wife of his son. Had that son presented himself in person, it is possible that his father's latent affection, and the memory of his departed wife, might have effected a reconciliation between them; but that the very cause of that child's disobedience—the "head and front of his offence"—should presume to appear in his own castle, which he had banned and barred against her, and vowed she should never enter—was too much for his pride to brook, and pride settled his agitated features, calmed his tremulous voice, chilled his heart's blood, nerved his hand to summon his domestics, and steadied his eye to behold a lady treated with insolence

and roughness, even tho' that lady was the most precious treasure of the child he really loved.

But there came a re-action of feeling;—and when the proud stern father, having thus vindicated his parental rights turned round again to his bureau, from which he had withdrawn his chair on Dermod's entrance,—the miniature on which he had been fondly gazing, and to which his eyes mechanically reverted, seemed to start from its setting and expand into the full figure of the being it represented. With features pale and wan, with eyes of melancholy and chiding tenderness, his dead wife seemed to his excited imagination to stand before him, asking him why he had treated thus his daughter-in-law. A shuddering came over him; he rose from his seat, and has extended his hand to reach the bell rope—he would call her back—when the mocking fiend whispered, “ay, own yourself in the wrong—renounce your own will—forget the oath which you swore—yield to an artful woman”—and the hand was withdrawn, and the troubled man returned for awhile to his seat, and then went forth to try

to forget in other occupations the rebukes of his conscience.

Mrs. O'Neill very quickly had heard from Dermod every particular of Fanny O'Neill's interview with her husband.

"Tell me, Dermod," said she, "is this girl with whom Charles was so infatuated, so very beautiful?"

"Certainly," he replied, "altho' Charles may not have shown his prudence in his choice, no one can call in question his taste. And I am sure my father was on the point of raising her up and forgiving her, for his lips quivered, and he grew as pale as death: it was only for an instant tho', and he recovered himself and rang the bell for the servants."

"And how did she bear her rebuff?"

"Like an injured queen. There is no chance of a repetition of the scene."

"Ah! proud as well as poor. Well, Dermod, you will not enjoy yourself the less because you know the result of this interview."

"To change the subject, this pocket book is not very amply filled, mother."

“But I suppose its contents can be renewed.”

“You must see to that, or I shall have to become a *chevalier d'industrie*, and live by my wits.”

The next morning Dermod left Iveragh. He went away without a regret for those he left behind, for he feared, but did not love his father, and he looked upon his mother only as being the intriguing agent for his aggrandizement, and the screen of his faults. Dermod was too thoroughly, selfish to love any one.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Oh, make a grave where the sunbeams rest,
When they promise a glorious morrow;
They'll shine o'er her sleep like a smile from the West,
From her own lov'd island of sorrow.”

MOORE.

“ Oh ! pourquoi n'ai-je pas de mise ?
Pourquoi ne suis-je pas semblable au jeune oiseau,
Dont le nid se balance aux branches de l'ormeau ?
Rien ne m'appartient sur la terre,
Je n'ai pas meme de berceau.”—

ALEXANDER SOUMET.

LET us follow poor Fanny O'Neill on her weary journey.

For hours, cramped and uncomfortable, she travelled by the uneasy jolting conveyance. The excitement, which had created a false energy, and made her forget her fatigue, had subsided,

but sleep came not to her relief. She was ill and feverish; a sense of loneliness and despondency came over her, and her heart sank at the thought that months must pass ere she should again look on the face of her husband.

The night, made long by discomfort and fatigue, at length passed, and Fanny O'Neill found herself about daybreak at the place where she was to leave the coach.

It was a wretched village, and the inn by the road side seemed unable to afford more than mere shelter to the humblest wayfarer. But to be emancipated from the uncomfortable vehicle was such a relief that Fanny saw it drive away without regret.

She made immediate enquiry for a car to convey her to the high road. She then found that, either intentionally or through ignorance, she had been misinformed as to the distance between that village and the main road, and that a journey of several stages was still before her. She was very tired, but there was no accommodation in the wretched inn; perhaps the air

would revive her, so she decided upon continuing her journey.

But the car, with its stiff unyielding spring, was even worse than the coach, and the road became every mile more hilly and uneven. Still Fanny went on, and had twice changed cars, as she completed the almost interminable stages.

At another time the scenery of that district might have attracted her attention, and diverted her mind from mournful thoughts, for it was singularly wild and varied.

At length Fanny felt that she was too ill to proceed any farther, and she desired the driver to stop at the first house that afforded any accommodation, however humble. But for miles, in that bare tract, there was not even a cabin, and poor Fanny could scarcely sit upright, so great was her lassitude, when they drew up at the door of a house at the entrance of a small village.

She alighted, and paid the driver, who forthwith turned his horse's head and departed.

The dwelling was a small inn of two stories,

which, although it might by comparison with the other cabins in that poor hamlet claim a higher rank than that of the mere shebeen, seemed but a sorry place of entertainment for either man or beast. The walls were rough-plastered, and whitewashed, and, though the rooms were boarded, the passage had only a mud floor.

Fanny was completely worn out, mind and body, and had some difficulty in stopping the landlady's volubility by the request that she would prepare her bed as soon as possible, for she was ill and tired. The worthy woman, convinced at last that her offers of refreshment were useless, retired to make the necessary preparations, and left her guest alone in the parlour.

As she sat there, reflecting on the ill success of her visit to Iveragh, and her bitter disappointment, her eye rested by chance on a newspaper lying on the table before her, which, strange to say, was only a day or two old. According to the custom of printers when attention is to be called to any special catastrophe,

there was an announcement in large type, and the first words that met Fanny's eyes were—

“Dreadful Shipwreck. Loss of the Transport Ship ‘Thetis.’”

She seized the paper; an instant was sufficient. Suddenly, as though struck down by some invisible hand, with a piercing shriek, she fell from her seat.

That scream rang throughout the house, and the landlady quickly ran into the parlour, and found her guest stretched senseless on the floor. The good woman, with what assistance was at hand, bore her up stairs, and laid her on the coarse pallet that had been prepared for her; and there, whilst yet in a state of heavy unconscious listlessness, the hour of “nature’s sorrow” came upon her.

“Och! wirra, wirra,” exclaimed the hostess, “an’ what will we do for the poor cratur? An’ this to happen in my house! Faix, an’ I’d rather not sell another bite or drop ’twixt now and Easter than have had this happen us. But

rin, Kathleen," she said to her eldest daughter, "rin an' tell ould Nancy M'Dermott that she is wanted; an' stay, mavourneen, jist step down to father Robert's before you come back, an' ax his riverence to call in."

"No, no," said Miles Dogherty, her husband: "go an' seek auld Nancy a-cuishla, an' then come back. Where would be the use of troublin' his riv'rance to step up here, an' she lyin' as little able to spake a word to him as if she was dead intirely. Wait a while, an' then call Father Robert."

In due time Nancy McDermott made her appearance. She was an aged crone, to whose supposed skill and science all the maladies and casualties in and about the hamlet were confided. They were too rare, however, for the acquisition of much experience, but old Nancy was the only person in that poor neighbourhood with the smallest pretensions to medical knowledge, for the scattered and scanty population gave no hope of practice to the doctor any more than their poverty could offer a temptation to the lawyer.

The inn was beset with the matrons of the village, who, however, confined their good offices to lamentations and pity.

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“Wirra! wirra!” exclaimed an old crone, coming out to a group of villagers standing by the inn door, “the root is withered, an’ the saplin’ has taken the life from the stock that bore it. Och hone! och hone!”

“The poor cratur is past all mortal aid an’ help now then?” asked one of the bystanders.

“Thru for you; but, alack! how will we find her kith and kin, that, maybe, know nothin’ of her bein’ in these parts at all—at all?”

“Did she say nothin’?”

“Sorra a word did she spake, barrin’ some that we could not catch the manin’ of.”

The old woman satisfied with having imparted the intelligence of poor Fanny’s death to those outside the house door, returned to the room she had left.

One of the women had on her lap the little

babe that had thus sadly and strangely appeared on the earth.

“An’ what’ll be done wid the purty cratur,” said she, “for its mother has lift it alone in the wide world.”

“Sure, was not Mary Falvey’s babe took from her an’ laid in the church-yard but yesterday, that was but three months old when it went to glory, God be praised,” said one of the women; “an’ wouldn’t she be proud to be all the same as a mother to the poor cratur that has lost its own?”

“Thru for you, Nelly,” replied Mrs. Dogherty, “an’ I’ll jist tell one of the gossoons rin down to her, an’ bid her step up. Patsy ’ll be back wid her in no time at all.”

Patsy, Mrs. Dogherty’s eldest son, and heir apparent to his father’s hostelry and farm, was forthwith summoned, and deputed to fetch the poor woman.

She quickly appeared, and was very soon induced to take charge of the infant, but it was not without tears at the thought of the babe she

had so lately laid down to rest in its narrow bed beneath the green turf in the old church-yard, that she received into her arms the little creature whom heaven had so soon sent to take its place.

Thus was poor Fanny's child provided with a foster mother.

CHAPTER VII.

“ As having clasped a rose
Within my palm ; the rose being ta'en away,
My hand retains a little breath of sweet ;
So my man's trunk, his spirit slipped away,
Hold still a faint perfume of his sweet guest.”

MARSTON.

“ My cradle was the couch of care,
And sorrow rocked me in it,
Fate seemed her saddest robe to wear,
On the first day that saw me there,
And deeply shadowed with despair
My earliest minute.”

CAMENUS.

TRAVELLING by the now almost obsolete medium of her Majesty's highway and a pair of post-horses, particularly if the road was not one of the principal channels of communication between the metropolis and the provinces, never attained

in Ireland the perfection which, before the introduction of railways, was almost universal in England.

Dermod's progress on his journey to his relative was slow and tedious, for the road was little frequented, and he found difficulty even in procuring the necessary relays of horses.

Their appearance and condition, and their driver's costume, seemed at length to have reached the extreme of wretchedness. The driver, a being squalid and unshaven, whose countenance seemed illustrative of that theory which advocates the gradual transition from the monkey to the man, and whose tattered trousers, vandyked in shreds, were partially concealed by the ragged flaps of a *cotamore*, or great coat, appeared dragging from their shed two animals of the genus *equus*. The motto under the impression of a man with a wooden leg was very applicable to them—they were “paired but not matched.” The one was a mere pony, the other a huge bony animal, whose skeleton might have passed for the remains of an antediluvian monster. Carriage

and horses were with difficulty set in motion, and Dermod found himself crawling up and creeping down the stony hills, at a pace which promised to protract his journey much beyond night fall, and his patience and temper were both exhausted, when, after a stage of sixteen Irish miles, he drove up to the abode of our worthy acquaintance, Miles Dogherty.

Upon his asking in no very courteous terms for fresh horses, he were informed that the pair which were made to do service on those extremely rare occasion when a travelling carriage appeared in the village, "had been carryin' turf all day from the bog, an' wouldn't it be a sin an' a shame to take the poor cratur's out agin, an' they jist made up for the night?" Miles was inexorable, and not to be moved by either abuse or entreaty; and the post boy, who was a shrivelled old man of seventy, declared that "the bastes were so dead bate wid the muthurin' hills that sorra another mile could mortal man coax them to go, barrin' on the road home again, and that same," added he, "is jist what I'll be afther doin'."

To advance any further was out of the question, and Dermod was compelled, tho' with a very ill grace, to accept the invitation of the sturdy Boniface, and tarry for the night beneath his roof.

Thus strangely were brought within the same threshold the wronger and the wronged, the heartless, sordid schemer and the gentle, guileless, injured wife of that man's brother.

As Miles ushered his guest into the only room which had any pretensions to be called a parlour, he took occasion to inform him of the sudden illness which had occurred in the same apartment.

"Troth an' it's frightened to death we were when we heard the scream the lady gave, an' found her lyin' there jist where yer honor is standin', all as one as dead."

"Well, I am glad it was not so in reality," replied Dermod: "I should not have liked to have had a wake going on over my head to-night in your house. It's bad enough without one," he added in a low voice; "but, come, let me have something

to eat, if you have got anything beyond potatoes and milk, and I suppose I must be content with a noggin of whisky—you've got no wine?"

The colour mounted to the publican's face at this slur upon the resources of his larder and cellar, but he contented himself with saying, in reply, "sure yer honor might have done betther to have brought yer own dinner wid you, for it isn't often we're called on to suit the quality, but as for the dhrink, though I say it that should not, I'll go bail you'll not find a betther bottle o' claret on this side the hill o' Howth, an' that's sayin' a good deal, for there's all Dhublin atwixt us. And as for somethin' for yer honor to ate wid it, there's a purty fowl that we thought might sarve the poor cratur that's tuk ill."

"If she was so ill, why didn't you send for a doctor?"

"Divil a docther is there nearer than ——; an' that's a matther o' thirty mile or more."

"Well," said Dermod, "see after the fowl, and don't forget a bottle of the best claret this side the hill of Howth."

Before Miles left the room he tendered the newspaper to Dermod, saying, "it's come down this mornin', yer honor, by chance."

"Oh! you're a politician are you," said Dermod, rather sneeringly.

"Well, yer honor, I do like a newspaper. I'm auld enough to remimber stirrin' times before yer honor was born, an' though I hope never to hear tell o' the likes o' Vinegar Hill or Wyford Bridge, divil a harm do I see in knowin' what thim Parliamint men are about: they're not always safe to be trusted."

With this not very complimentary remark, Miles Dogherty left the room.

Dermod did not take up the newspaper, but strolled out, and on his return found his dinner prepared, and was speedily doing ample justice to the fowl and claret, which, to say the truth, its owner had not overrated.

Nor let my reader wonder at the boast. Claret was in Ireland a much more general beverage than ever it has been in England, and that must have been a poor shebeen indeed, which was not, at one

period, well provided with a fair description of that wine.

Dermot, having settled himself in the old-fashioned high backed arm chair, sipped his wine listlessly and with *ennui*. Occasionally, he was roused by persons walking along the passage, and the sound of their voices, but he was not one to interest himself much about other people, and he remained in the arm chair till sleep came to his assistance, and helped to pass away one of those half hours which never seem more tedious than when they are involuntarily spent in the dull parlour of a country inn.

Awaking, he again applied himself to the claret. To relieve the monotony of emptying and re-filling his glass, which was of very much less capacious dimensions than such as we generally use—for our predilection seems to be for the ancient capacity, which gives the point to the old poet's epigram against the lady, who,

Turning out a vessel like a tun,
Simpering, exclaimed, 'Observe, I drink but one,'

Dermod took up the hitherto neglected newspaper.

It was the same in which occurred the fatal paragraph which, by the announcement of her husband's untimely end, had proved to be the death warrant of poor Fanny O'Neill.

Dermod threw a careless and still drowsy glance over its contents, but the same large characters which had so fatally arrested Fanny's eyes, drew his attention likewise.

"Loss of the *Thetis*!" said he, aloud; "that was the very ship that Charles told me he was to sail in." And Dermod carefully perused the particulars of the ship's wreck. Remorselessly as he had pursued the tenor of his selfish course, he yet felt a pang, as, among the names of those who had perished, he read that of Lieutenant Charles O'Neill. But the pang was only momentary, and was soon lost in the reflection that he was now heir to Iveragh Castle and its broad lands.

He read the account again and again. "No," said he, communing with himself, "there can be

no doubt of the truth of the shipwreck. There was no other officer of our name in the regiment. I wonder how my father will bear the intelligence."

Dermod sat musing and staring at the dark turf fire—"But," thought he, with a start, "there will be a child;—what if it should be a boy? Then am I again supplanted."

Dermod continued revolving in his mind these and many other reflections, and debating whether he should return to Iveragh or proceed to his uncle's house. He determined upon the latter course, and was still speculating upon the results of his brother's death, when Miles Dogherty made his appearance at the door, with a very serious countenance.

"I beg your honor's pardon," said he, "but I make bould to ax you honor if you would plaze step up stairs."

"Why so?" asked Dermod.

"I did not like to disturb you honor before, but it has plazed God to take the poor sick lady to himself—the heavens be her bed."

“But of what use can I be upstairs?”

“It would be a favor to us if you would be present, a witness your honor—till the poor cratur’s things be sarched, for sorra a word did she say that we might know who or what she was.”

“Well,” replied Dermod, “I don’t mind going. You will not be long I suppose.”

Thus ungraciously assenting to the proposal, Dermod followed the worthy publican up the narrow stairs to the chamber of death.

On the coarse rough pallet, pale and stiffening, lay poor Fanny’s corpse. Beautiful in death, almost more than in life, were her features. An expression of sweet repose had come over them, as though sleep had conquered pain, and anxious care had been succeeded by contentment and resignation. There was almost a smile on her lips, the token, it seemed, of some soft calm pleasure.

“There she lies, poor thing!” said Miles as he entered the room.

Dermod looked over his host’s shoulder. “My God!” he exclaimed, as his eyes beheld again the

features which, tho' seen but once, had left a true impression on his memory.

Miles had lowered the candle he held, and its light fell directly on the face of the corpse. He heard Dermod's exclamation, but merely thought that the sad spectacle had, naturally enough, caused a sudden emotion in the young man's heart, and, turning round, said to him: "She is young an beautiful, yer honor, to lave the world so soon."

But honest Dogherty's reflection was lost upon Dermod, who had turned away bewildered with the awfulness of the discovery, and shocked as he had felt, for a time, at the intelligence of his brother's death, he was far more so now;—he stood speechless, as if in a dream.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Dogherty was employed in searching the small travelling box, which was all the luggage which Fanny had brought with her. Miles had gone to his wife's side, but now came back to where Dermod was standing.

"My wife has looked over the things, yer honor, and sorra a letter or sign of any name is

there among them, there is just a mark on her handkerchief, and here are a picture and a ring."

"They were in her hands when she died," interrupted Mrs. Dogherty.

The former was a small exquisitely painted miniature, of a youthful and handsome officer, the latter was a wreath of diamonds, which had been worn as a guard to the wedding ring.

"Faix, an divil a doubt is there that she's of the raal quality," said Miles, exhibiting them.

A cold shudder ran through Dermod's whole body as he looked on that likeness of his own brother, whom he had so cruelly injured.

Just then, the little infant, whom Dermod had not noticed, raised its feeble cry, and recalled him to a selfish consciousness.

"Is that her child?" he asked.

"It is, your honour."

"A boy?"

"It is, your honour, an' he seems strong an' healthy; an' ould Nancy says—"

Dermod listened no more; and if the thought of announcing his relationship to that pale corpse

had entered his mind, it passed away. A dumb devil possessed him, and closed his lips. Dermod never acted from impulse. Then, as he looked at the frail babe, whose lamp of life had been so lately lit, and might be so easily quenched, a dark thought crossed his mind.

He stood apart, in almost breathless anxiety, waiting to make sure that no discovery should be made of Fanny's name.

"Is this all you have found?" said he, at last, with forced calmness.

Nothing more had been ascertained to enlighten the perplexity of Dogherty and his wife, and Dermod, very pale and agitated, left the room.

When he re-entered the parlour, he flung himself down in the old arm chair, and fairly gasped for breath. In a few minutes, his intense agitation passed away, and he could scarcely believe that he had not been dreaming.

The bottle was yet on the table: he seized it, but it was empty. He laid hold of the string attached to the bell-wire, and summoned the publican.

“Another bottle of claret,” said he to Miles as he entered, “and a tumbler; this is no better than a thimble.”

In a few minutes, Miles appeared with the bottle.

“Your honour likes the wine,” he observed, with a smile, “I said it was bad to bate.”

“You were right: it is excellent.” Dermod was quite composed, apparently. “Set it down before the fire—there, that will do; a little warmth brings out the flavour. Thank you.”

Miles departed, but he had scarcely closed the door, when Dermod seized the bottle, poured the wine into a tumbler almost to the brim, and drained it at a draught.

“Curse the brat!” he exclaimed aloud, setting down the glass; “here it is born and living, to stand in my way. But the life of a child,” he continued after awhile, “what is it? A thread, a bit of glass, snapped in an instant. Even,” thought he, becoming more composed, “supposing it should live, though its chances of life are not great, its being may never be discovered. Why am

I to proclaim the existence of the heir of Iveragh? How should I know who this lady is? I never saw her but once. But then the miniature. Bah! the room was dark: I did not see the likeness. No, no, I'll let things take their course."

Thus for some time Dermot weighed in his mind, and occasionally argued aloud, the chances of the future with relation to himself and the unconscious infant in the room above him. He was puzzled how to act, and he bethought him of her who had always been his confidante and often his guide. He took a sheet of paper from his writing desk, and once more cold, impassive, heartless, Dermot detailed to his mother the strange events which had happened since he had arrived at that poor inn.

A few months later, Dermot would have locked up the information within his own bosom, but he had been so accustomed to find his mother the ready abettor of all his selfish views that he did not reflect that he was doing a very imprudent thing in committing to paper such evi-

dence of his share in the occurrences which he narrated.

It was late before he had finished writing, and, although it was raining, and the official who combined the occupations of grocer and postmaster lived at the extremity of the straggling hamlet, Dermod declined his host's offer to send Patsy with the letter, and went himself to the post office.

With a hesitation partaking of the doubts which had filled his mind, he dropped the letter into the box, and this being done, he returned immediately and retired to his room for the night. But it was long before the remembrance of the strange events of the day permitted him to close his eyes in sleep. Which was to be preferred—the guilty sleep of the living man, or the sinless slumber of the dead mother!

There was but a thin partition between the two chambers of death and sin, and dark night had spread her mantle over them both; but there was One whose eye was equally upon those two chambers.

Sweet, passing sweet, it is to a mother to watch the unfolding faculties of her babe, to mark the timid eye, pleased and yet astonished, expand to the novelty of the countless objects around it; and, chief delight, to see the smile that plays on the tiny mouth when first on her is cast the look of recognition and preference: to sit for hours beside the cot of her treasure, and, while the sight is dimmed with the half-formed tear of pride and tenderness, to think true the beautiful fiction that to the ears of the cherub as it laughs in its slumbers, are being breathed the whispers of kindred angels; to call forth from the shadowy future the joys to come, and to trace in the soft, smooth features of the infant of a few weeks' life the handsome countenance or the brilliant beauty of the full-formed man or woman. Deep is the heart's-spring of a mother's love; for, "come weal, come woe," in health and sickness—ay, and in unkindness and ingratitude, too, how true it is that "the heart we have lain near before our birth is the only one that cannot forget that it has loved us."

To Fanny O'Neill maternal joys had been all denied; and the bell tolled from the humble chapel, and she rested amid the nameless graves of the hallowed ground of the old church-yard, some miles from the village where she had died.

There was no one of the inhabitants of that poor hamlet at all qualified to trace the parentage of the babe who had been cast among them. The priest who consigned the unknown mother to her last resting-place became aware of the circumstances of the child's birth, and he did what was in his power to cause investigation to be made; but the good man had long lived in seclusion among the hills; the duties of a widely-spread parish occupied all his time, and in no respect was he calculated to undertake the requisite inquiries.

Nor let my readers deem me to be drawing too largely on their credulity in allowing Fanny O'Neill to sink unknown into her grave, and her babe to be dependent for its life and nourishment on the good offices of a lowly villager.

Though I might remind them of the saying,

not more trite than true, that "truth is stranger than fiction," and that modern prescription allows to the Novelist all the latitude which ancient custom gave to the poet and painter, bounded only by the injunction—

"Non ut

Serpentis avibus quimentum tigribus agni,"—

I would yet have them consider that Fanny's father, the only remaining member of the family, had quitted Ireland for a distant country, where (to conclude his history) he had hardly landed before sorrow, anxiety, and the change of climate completely broke down his already shattered constitution, and he died before any correspondence had passed between him and the child he had left behind; that, with a timidity which shrinks from becoming the topic of gossip and tea-table small-talk, Fanny had disclosed to no one her destination when she visited Iveragh; that she had sent the bulk of her wardrobe in the ill-fated 'Thetis,' providing herself with what was merely necessary for a time, and, that she had

neglected to affix her address to her travelling trunk; that the hamlet where she breathed her last was far from the great trunk roads, and in a wild, thinly-peopled district; that, from her father's reduced circumstances she had not a large acquaintance; and, to say no more, that the most startling occurrences cannot boast of being more than a "nine day's wonder."

The little orphan had fallen into kind and careful hands. The poor woman to whom he had been confided was strong and sincere in her untutored affection, and she loved the high-born babe as if it had been her own, and the boy grew strong and healthy under her humble roof.

"Och! cuishla-ma-chree," she sometimes would say, pressing the babe she had received in place of her own to her kind heart, "may the saints in Heaven watch over you and protect you; a mother's blessing be on you darlint. Benach, milla benach—benach Dhea, a-cuishla."

My readers must supply for themselves, as regards the little being so rudely flung upon life's ocean, the various incidents in the cycle of infant

and childish existence. Months and years rolled on—the grass grew and died, the flowers blossomed and faded above poor Fanny's grave;—the sea had never yielded up the remains of her soldier-husband;—but, although their youthful loving hearts rested not side by side, their spirits had, perhaps, met in another world to part no more, and perchance were looking down on the babe they had left behind, and blessing those who had supplied their place, and given a home to their orphan child.

CHAPTER VIII.

“The family of the Lambs had long been among the most thriving and popular in the neighbourhood * * * They were smitten with a passion for high life.”

WASHINGTON IRVING.

“Watering places might with equal propriety be called fishing places, because they are frequented by female anglers, who are in quest of such prey, the younger for themselves, the elder for their daughters.”

SOUTHEY.

THE Dobisons lived in what was not the fashionable quarter of a large manufacturing town.

They were four in family, the father, mother, and two daughters.

Their names might assuredly be sought for in

vain in the Roll of Battle Abbey (though that honorable catalogue is said to contain some which have not much right to be there).

Mr. Dobison's father—antecedently to that worthy and estimable individual tradition is silent—had left his son a fortune which was the result of many years' patient devotion to his business. This business had been, at first, carried on behind the counter of a shop, and not a large one either—not one with a frontage of brass window frames, and plate glass ten feet by six—but had finally been expanded and transferred to seven and eight-storied warehouses and counting-houses, well furnished with huge ledgers and pale-faced clerks.

This fortune would have been very considerable had it not been for an unlucky venture. Tempted—as old men sometimes are by material syrens—beyond the bounds of prudence, by the smiles of fortune which had hitherto proved very constant, Mr. Dobison embarked in a speculation far exceeding any which he had hitherto entered upon. It failed; and, though

no man could say that Mr. Dobison owed him a farthing, it was a blow from which neither the old man's banking book nor his constitution ever recovered. Thus the property which he retained was not a tithe of what it was before the last unfortunate venture, although it still amounted to more than what he himself had begun life with, and, in careful and diligent hands, might form the nucleus of an ample and permanent fortune.

With this property, his son—the subject of my notice—had carefully traded, and, in course of time—although Mr. Dobison did not pretend to rank with the merchant princes of his native town—he found himself, as a fortunate speculator and a man of considerable wealth, looked upon with that respect and deference which success generally commands.

In the domestic circle, however, Mr. Dobison was not, perhaps, of that importance which his position in reference to it might warrant.

He was not an ambitious man, and, had he consulted his own tastes and inclinations, he would have continued to inhabit in his increased

prosperity and affluence, the same dingy, low-roomed house, under the shadow and smoke of the tall chimney which had witnessed the early struggles of Mr. Dobison, senior.

But such lowly habits suited not the larger soul and more comprehensive views of his wife.

Although I am bound to confess that Mrs. Dobison's origin was humble, and her education deficient, she had, by the exercise of her managing and matter-of-fact qualifications, materially assisted in the ascent of the family up the "ladder of gold," but, after a considerable elevation had been attained, and a permanent footing seemed secured, she disdained to pass her days, spider-like, in laborious obscurity, and resolved that the sun of her latter life should pursue his way by a more conspicuous path.

Unlike a certain contented being, who, when fortune, with sudden freak, transported her from the humble lodging of her husband, once a banker's clerk, to a gay and gaudy mansion, bitterly complained that her bunch of keys—precious as the portfolio of a minister—would

have to be given up; that, dressed in silk, she would have to sit in her gilded drawing-room, and take the air in her cushioned carriage, and, who in fine, pined and died of no other complaint but prosperity and wealth, the adventurous Mrs. Dobison appreciated the smiles of the fickle goddess, and determined at once to assert her right to walk abroad in the full blaze of her prosperity.

Her two daughters—Clementina and Amelia were their names—proved useful adjuncts and powerful auxiliaries, and their fond mother so worked upon the feelings of her good-natured spouse by the picture which she sketched of the sensation the young ladies were certain to make in their novel sphere of high society, and, of the brilliant alliances which with their fortunes, they were sure to form, that, although the good man's heart still warmed towards his plain three o'clock dinner and social evenings at his club, he was fairly overcome; and, while feeling himself to be a domestic Coriolanus—for that, in granting his wife's request, his own happiness was undone

—he consented, at length, to leave his home and occupations.

The die was cast, and Mr. Dobison, in a philosophic spirit, resigned himself, life and purse, into the hands of his wife and daughters, consoling himself with the hope that their matrimonial visions would ere long be realized, and that then—the grand object of their foray on the aristocratic borders being accomplished—he might, with all honour, seek once more his congenial retirement.

He was, therefore, inexorable upon the subject of the sale of their house; for Mrs. Dobison, acting upon that strategic policy which has induced certain generals to deprive their troops of all means of retreat in order to impress upon them the desperate necessity of advance and victory, suggested that their late residence should be forthwith advertised for sale.

But Mr. Dobison was too much attached, from motives both of the past and future, to his household gods, to desert them entirely; and, therefore, the guardianship of his Laus and

Penates was, for the time, entrusted to the old housekeeper ; and their preparations for the exodus commenced, greatly to the advantage of certain dressmakers, and milliners, and haberdashers, from whose stores the ladies selected an ample and varied provision for the exigencies of their opening campaign.

Cheltenham was selected as the scene of their entrance on the *beau monde*; and accordingly, as soon as might be, the Dobisons exhibited themselves and the fashions of their native town in all the public walks of that "fair muse of fountains."

None were neglected; Pittville and Montpellier, the old well walk, and the Promenade, were alternately refreshed with the sight of Mrs. Dobison's open, good humoured, rubicund countenance, set in one of the most enlivening bonnets which Miss Sample (she had slightly modified her name, and now wrote it Mademoiselle de Sampelle) had ever enriched with a perfect *hortus siccus* of rare and remarkable exotics. Moreover, they revolved daily round the hy-

gienic fountains with the regularity, if not the brilliancy, of higher constellations, and had presently tasted of each variety, for Hippocrene was not more sacred to the Muses than were these waters, gushing forth from the well-trodden soil of aristocracy, to Mrs. Dobison and her daughters.

The parade of these household troops certainly caused, as had been anticipated, a sensation, but one rather different from what their generalissima had expected; but they moved on, blissfully ignorant of the stare of the confectioner's errand boy, as he daudled up the Promenade with a singular collection of architectural devices and long tin boxes on his head, unaware of the haberdasher's apprentice, who stretched his neck over the counter, or flattened his nose against the window pane to "take an observation" of the strangely cut mantle or flaunting bonnet that went by, and innocently misinterpreting the smile of the courteous Master of Ceremonies, as, for the fiftieth time in his walk from Montpellier to High Street, he lifted his hat and bowed low,

prompted to the act by the remembrance of an entry made by Mr. Dobison in a certain blank book at one of the libraries.

But, alas! no magic squares of pasteboard gave the Dobisons an opportunity of displaying Mademoiselle de Sampelle's taste and skill in ball or evening costume.

Mrs. Dobison, however, was not long in discovering that there were such things as public balls held periodically. Here there was an opening for her and her girls. And very soon it was taken advantage of.

CHAPTER IX.

“HENRIQUEZ— Where are the minstrel's?
Let them strike up a dance: we are too still.
“LEONORA—Doubt not we shall be gay; but we expect
Some merry maskers here to join our revels;
They should have come ere now.”

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE young lady who (on Mademoiselle de Sampelle's recommendation) had been engaged to accompany the Dobison party, in the capacity of what Mr. Dobison called a tire-woman, had, you may be sure, no sinecure on the day of the ball.

An early dinner was the first symptom that time, on that day at least, was precious.

Mrs. Dobison was the first to undergo the requisite metamorphosis; and she made her appearance about six o'clock in full evening costume, in order that her dear girls might not be hurried, and that Ann Jane (the tire-woman) might have time to do them justice. At that hour then, and before the searching brilliancy of garish day had been succeeded in the drawing-room by the light of the milder composite or subdued solar, Mrs. Dobison, with slow and measured step, advanced into the room. A sea-green silk dress encircled her portly person, and a bright scarlet turban crowned her upright head.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Clementina, "how handsome your dress looks."

"And how well it is made," added Amelia.

"And pray what do you think of me?" inquired the self-satisfied lady, appealing to her spouse; and, at the same time, revolving slowly on her own axis for his inspection.

"Is it to be a fancy ball, my dear?" asked Mr. Dobison.

“A fancy ball, indeed! What should make you think it is to be a fancy ball?”

“Well, my dear,” replied Mr. Dobison apologetically, “I thought—that turban—looked—rather Turkish and uncommon.”

“Some men have no notion of style and taste; though some husbands take a pride in seeing their wives well dressed. But go, girls,” added their mamma, with an air of proud pity for the ignorance of men in general, and Mr. Dobison in particular, “Ann Jane is waiting for you, and it will not do to hurry her.”

Then Mrs. Dobison slowly and majestically descended upon an ample ottoman, where she proposed to remain, apart from the contact of narrow arm chairs, that her dress might run no risk of losing aught of its uncrumpled amplitude.

The young ladies in due time, that is, in about three hours, rejoined Mr. and Mrs. Dobison in the drawing-room, and Ann Jane was pronounced to have succeeded admirably in their toilette.

"I hope," observed Mrs. Dobison, after a general and particular inspection of her daughters' costumes, "that Mr. Splinterbar will not forget us. I desired the fly might be here to a minute."

"Depend upon it, mamma, he will come, but as it is the ball night, I dare say he has so much to do he cannot be quite punctual. Our fly is probably taking some other party to the ball-room before us."

"Dear, dear, how it rains! Take care girls," said the anxious mother, "not to wet your sandals, mind your dresses do not touch the wheel, and be sure not to slip as you get out. Oh! I hear a carriage coming. Now then. No, it has gone past. There's another. Dear, how crowded the ball will be! All these carriages are going to take up, I suppose. There's the bell. Here is the fly at last. Now, girls, we must not keep it waiting."

"Good night, papa," said Clementina and Amelia.

"Good night, my dears; much enjoyment to

you," replied their worthy father, who much preferred entrusting his daughters to the able generalship of their energetic mamma, to conducting them to the ball-room himself.

"To the Assembly Rooms," said Mrs. Dobison, with an air of dignity, as she placed her foot on the step of the carriage. It yielded and swung towards her, for hers was no feather weight, and she was too much occupied in effecting an entrance into the vehicle to notice the driver's smile, which was rather on the increase as he slammed the door to, shutting in a few inches of Miss Dobison's flounce. The smile expanded into a broad grin as he passed another fly, and the drivers exchanged certain telegraphic gestures suggestive of each other's freights and destinations, and productive of increased risibility.

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Clementina, "I'm fast; that horrid man has shut in my dress."

"Take care you don't—" but Mrs. Dobison's warning suggestion was cut short by a sudden jerk, which nearly displaced her turban.

“Good gracious!” she exclaimed, “we are in the string now.”

Almost before the words were said, the door, glass and all, was thrown open, and the steps let down with all the noise usual on such occasions.

“Good gracious,” repeated the lady, becoming considerably agitated, “are we at the Assembly Rooms?”

“Yes, mum,” said a strange voice at the door.

“Oh, dear! then we must get out.”

“Yes, mum,” repeated the same voice, in the same short tone.

Mrs. Dobison suited her action to the word, and trod so heavily upon the step, which, from long service, had acquired an undue downward tendency, that, had it not been for the fortunate intervention of the owner of the quick mysterious voice, her scarlet turban would, like that of some unbelieving Moslem, vanquished by a stalwart Crusader—have rolled in the mire.

“I say, Bill,” said a little vulgar boy, who was watching the exit, to his companion, “run

for the fire ingine; her chimney top's a fire; see how red it is."

Amelia followed closely, and Mrs. Dobison, in a state of flurry and agitation, I do not say, sailed, which is, I believe, the approved expression, but pitched and rolled into the ante-room, shaking out the folds of her ample sea-green dress on each side, like paddle-vexed waves. To continue the metaphor, she dropped anchor in the cloak room, and, turning round, then only discovered that one of her daughters was missing.

"Where's Clementina?" she exclaimed. "Oh! here she comes."

That young lady had endeavoured to follow in the wake of the maternal convoy, but, as we are aware, her rigging was fast in the fly door. With dismay, she saw her mother and sister disappear, vociferating meanwhile, like the caged starling, "I can't get out, I can't get out." But the useful functionary who saved Mrs. Dobison and her turban from an ignominious fall, saw her distress, and, slipping round, knight-like, set free the imprisoned damsel.

"My eye, Bill, she's a vopper," said the little vulgar boy, at the same time bringing his dirty thumb in contact with his little snub nose, thereby, with the assistance of his digits, accomplishing that gesture which is technically termed "taking a sight."

"What time, if you please, Miss?" asked the driver of the fly.

But Miss Dobison was far too anxious to rejoin her mother, to heed any remarks, or answer any questions, and rushed frantically forward along the passage.

The meeting being effected, and the sisters having looked each other over, the three ladies prepared to make their appearance in the ball-room, whence, greatly to their surprise, there issued neither the swell of music, nor the measured tread of feet, nor the sound of voices.

Leaving the explanation of this silence to time, they passed out of the cloak-room, and entered the ball-room.

"Good gracious, girls! why, there's nobody here," exclaimed Mrs. Dobison, pulling up short, like a jibbing horse.

So it was: the room long and spacious, looked interminable in its desertion, while, in the gallery, the members of a very scanty orchestra leaned listlessly over their music stands, not caring to waste one note of their idle instruments on the untrodden floor and empty benches.

At the farthest end of the room, pacing cross-wise, with hat in hand, "alone in his glory," was, as the medal suspended from his neck by the broad blue silk ribbon indicated, the master of the ceremonies.

Seeing the three ladies enter, he instantly came forward, getting up, during his transit, the blandest of smiles, and terminating his journey with the most faultless of bows.

"I greatly fear, Mrs. Dobison," he commenced, "that your young ladies will be disappointed of their dancing to-night."

"You don't say so," replied the lady; "we expected to have found the ball-room quite crowded."

"Unfortunately," resumed the M. C., "to night has been fixed upon for Lady Tearaway's

fancy ball. Her ladyship's ball will, I fear, have more attractions than our more humble meeting. But here is another party; though alas!" he added, with a compassionate glance at the Miss Dobisons, "there are as yet no beaux."

Presently a tall thin young gentleman made his appearance, and the young ladies began to hope that as, according to the very trite verse—"Coming events cast their shadows before,"—so this very shadowy young gentleman might be the *avant courier* of something more substantial.

He tarried awhile in the vicinity of the entrance, looking anything but happy; then, deeming it, no doubt, utterly impossible to smoothe his white kid gloves any further on his fingers, took heart, and launched himself forth to the wide expanse of waxed floor. His voyage across being safely accomplished, he remained moored upon a bench at the other side of the room for some time, but looking, and probably feeling shy and awkward, he slid noiselessly back again, and, like a ghost vanishing from the stage, disappeared from the eyes of the spectators.

With his defection the hopes of the company sank still lower; and at length the master of the ceremonies, watch in hand, made the circuit of the room, and delicately insinuated to the disappointed Dobisons, and the other eight or ten ladies who were dotted here and there, like gulls on a creek, that it was altogether a hopeless case, and that there was no chance of any dancing that night: but he trusted that they should meet again, and be more fortunate on a future occasion. Thus throwing as much sympathy and consolation as was possible into his parting speech and farewell bow, the M.C. secretly rejoicing to be relieved from the unpleasant task of catering for the amusement of a few chance comers, took his departure, and pocketing the insignia of his office on his way out, hailed a fly, and shortly afterwards made his appearance, all smiles and satisfaction, in the crowded rooms of Lady Tearaway.

Deceived, disappointed, and depressed, the Dobisons slowly retreated from the ball-room.

The presiding nymph of the cloak depart-

ment, while handing to the ladies their shawls and handkerchiefs, reiterated the master of the ceremonies' words of sympathy and hope; but Mrs. Dobison's feelings had received too severe a shock for consolation, and her only remark was the question, "How were they to get home?"

"Allow me to call a fly for you," said the polite young woman, who was herself going out to join a select tea-party, and she tripped off on her charitable errand.

The Dobisons, meanwhile, stood cloaked and ready, but as yet silent, for their confused perceptions had not taken a definite and communicative form. They merely looked at each other, and noted, with the ardent feelings of soldiers who with their accoutrements unstained, their arms undimmed, have wasted their time in indolence, that no flounce was tumbled, no bouquet crushed, but "they spoke not a word of sorrow."

"There is a fly at the door, ladies," said the disinterested young woman, who was going out to tea and cards.

This was the signal for their final evacuation of the deserted room. And the trio once more found themselves in motion, and were quickly deposited at their own house door.

Mr. Dobison, in the gratified and amiable belief that his wife and daughters were commencing an evening of unbounded pleasure, and, it might be, of important results affecting the destinies of the latter, had heard the carriage wheels roll from his door, and for a while he indulged in a sort of dreamy speculative state of mind. His visions, however, did not resolve themselves into anything very clear; and being a man, from character and habit, more addicted to the real than to the imaginative his thoughts quickly descended from the realms of fancy, and taking up the "Commercial Gazette and Mercantile Chronicle"—even yet his *vade mecum*, he ensconced himself comfortably in an easy chair, and devoted himself to a more congenial occupation.

His first employment was a careful perusal of the various commercial reports at home and

abroad. There he saw cotton mentioned as "ruling heavy," "lead with an upward tendency," "spelter very lively," "tin plates rather dull." He then became duly impressed with the extraordinary announcement from the Indian market that, while "pale ale meets with no enquiry," empty bottles are in great request;" and observed that, although "quicksilver was dull," yet that "one hundred and fifty bags of salt-petre had gone off with spirit;" and that though "Turkey red yarns were languid," that "Scotch pig iron was very firm."

He then turned to the bulletin of the health of the patients in that interesting hospital, the "money market." There he read that "money was rather tighter," the "stocks were feverish and uneasy," and "quotations rather weaker:" anything but a hopeful report.

"Dear me," quoth the worthy man to himself, "money was generally easier last week, though, to be sure, I did see that the market had had a slight collapse."

Then he put the newspaper on his knees, and

gave himself up to a mental recapitulation and synthesis of the various pieces of information which he had noticed.

He had just come to the conclusion that the state of affairs in general was much the same as it had been of late, when he heard the noise of a carriage stopping at his door, followed by a peal from the ring-bell, which seemed to convey from the ringer the conviction of his perfect right of entry.

"It must be a mistake," thought he; "they cannot be back already;" and he sat upright, listening like a hare with pricked ears.

The mystery was soon solved. The door of the drawing-room flew open, and Mrs. Dobison, no longer the stiff and stately, but the excited and undignified, burst into the room.

"Bless me!" said the astonished husband, "what is the matter?"

"Matter enough, Mr. Dobison!" exclaimed his lady; "I'll not stay here any longer. There's no ball—no ball! is that not matter enough?"

And she sat down on the sofa with a violence that made the patent springs shrink together and jingle in commotion.

"No ball, my dear! What, have you mistaken the night?"

"Not a bit of it. But it's a shame and a scandal. There's that horrid Lady Bounce-away—"

"Tearaway, mamma," said Amelia.

"Well, Tearaway—and I wish she would tear herself away," added Mrs. Dobison with bitter pleasantry. "She has an absurd fancy ball to-night, as if she couldn't choose any other of the three hundred and sixty-five nights in the year for it, but must fix it for to-night, just to spoil the amusement of quiet, sensible people, who don't care to dress themselves up like mountebanks and morris dancers;" and Mrs. Dobison rose up like a tragedy queen multiplied by two, and made the circuit of the room with quick and indignant step.

"Don't you think it was too bad, papa?" said Amelia.

“And was there no one there at all?” asked the individual appealed to.

“Yes,” answered Clementina, “there was the Master of the Ceremonies, quite ready, with his badge and blue ribbon.”

“And a gentlemanly young man in black,” added Amelia, “but he did not stay long.”

“And a lady with four daughters,” wound up Mrs. Dobison, emphasizing the “four,” and showing now, as then, how her kind heart sympathized with one so blessed. “I got into conversation with her, and she said if she were a man—a man, Mr. Dobison—she would write to all the newspapers about it, and show Lady Tearaway up.”

“It is really unfortunate,” said Mr. Dobison, not relishing the inuendo conveyed by the last speech, “and I am very sorry, indeed; but it won’t be the last ball: when will there be another?”

“Nonsense, another,” said Mrs. Dobison, firing up again; “that’s just what the cloak-woman said, and I’m sure I saw her laughing, though

she pretended to be mighty civil, and quite sorry for our disappointment. Another, indeed! why, we've been here nearly a month, and what for? What for, Mr. Dobison? But men are so selfish. As long as you get your newspaper, and your arm chair, and your port, you don't care for anything."

"I am sure, my dear, it wasn't I who proposed coming here," mildly observed the head of the family.

"Well, it's no use talking about such things," resumed the excited matron; "men don't care about them, and one can't expect them to understand a mother's feelings. So, girls, we may as well go to bed."

In this agitated state of her maternal emotions, Mrs. Dobison led the way out of the room, followed by her daughters, who forthwith proceeded, while divesting themselves of their finery—alas! fresh and untumbled—to detail their griefs and grievances to Ann Jane.

Mr. Dobison remained later than usual that night in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER X.

Self flattered, inexperienced, high in hope,
When young, with sanguine cheer, and streamers gay
We cut our cable, launch into the world,
And fondly dream each wind and star our friend.

YOUNG.

Now is the woodcock near the gin.

SHAKSPEARE.

It is time we should return to Fred Courtenay and Harry Montague. They had been travelling about to their heart's content, and, in addition to much enjoyment, to the acquisition of as much information as tourists are wont to come home with, or rather more, as well as to the very great profit of postmasters, hotel keepers, *valets de place*, guides, *et hoc genus omne*, who flatter,

cajole, cheat, and laugh at *Milor Anglais*. Moreover, they seemed to have understood and practised the celebrated American clockmaker's counsel, for, as Mr. Slick observes, "grumblin' spiles the relish, and hurts the digestion."

One circumstance, however, had grieved Fred extremely. On calling one day at the *Poste restante*, after an excursion in a wild and unfrequented district, among the letters which had been *couchant* in their pigeon hole for some time was one, the large black seal of which immediately attracted Courtenay's notice. It contained the intelligence of the death of his guardian, and, though Fred considered the event as one calling for his most sincere sorrow, a person less self-satisfied would have also bewailed it as entailing in addition, the loss of a true and trusty pilot.

The friends had made a very extensive tour, but the greatest portion of their time had been spent in the sunny lands of poetry, romance, and chivalry, where Petrarch loved, where the Troubadours had sung, and where the Cid had fought and conquered.

They were strolling one day, during their stay in Paris, along the Boulevard des Italiens, when, most unexpectedly, they encountered their old schoolfellow, Dermot O'Neill. He also had a companion, whom he introduced to his two friends, and they all agreed to dine together.

Captain Brown, Dermot's acquaintance, thinking, perhaps, that the three schoolfellows might prefer being left to themselves, volunteered to order dinner, and presently took leave of them.

However grandly young men may deport themselves in public, they generally drop the buskin in their own society, and pleasantly and unaffectedly recur to the scenes and days when it was not thought incumbent in them to act a part.

Even Fred became a boy again, and the three schoolmates, naturally enough, recalled many events which had happened before they were separated.

After many an allusion to their College frays and freaks, and many a hearty laugh, they proceeded to a restaurant, and, though they did not practise the fashionable folly of want of punc-

tuality they found Captain Brown waiting for them.

“I hope,” said he, “that you will find that I have catered successfully for you.”

Although Captain Brown disclaimed being a *gourmet*, the dinner was *recherché* and excellent. The spirits of the young men rose, their conversation was unaffected, and the gallant Captain made himself remarkably pleasant, mentioning many interesting and humorous anecdotes respecting those who were now figuring in the society of Paris. He usually gave his authority for these details, “such as the Duke of Broadacres,” “my friend Jack Hottentot—Lord Capetown now—who is travelling in Egypt,” “Lady Palmelle Pedaque, who is going to winter in Rome,” “Baron Van Hittharde, who has gone to California,” and so on; but, with the exception of a Madame Cotillon, it was rather singular that none of his friends were in Paris that season.

They passed the evening at one of the theatres, when they separated, all rejoicing at their unexpected meeting in the morning.

Capt. Brown and O'Neill departed arm in arm.

"Well, O'Neill," said the former, "have you heard from Iveragh?"

"No, indeed, I have not; and I can assure you I had not much left in my purse after our reckoning to-day was paid. You ordered a confoundedly expensive dinner."

"And a very good one—I did so on purpose. Those young fellows will want me to do so again some of these days. Your friend Sir Frederick is rich, isn't he?"

"Twelve thousand a-year in land, besides a good deal of ready money. I've taken his measure pretty correctly you may depend."

"I like him better than his companion. He talks and drinks twice as much."

"Montague is a plaguey steady fellow," replied Dermot. "Fred will not break loose as long as Montague is at his elbow. But I suspect they are both tolerably green."

"So I should think."

"They seem to have been passing the last two years in picture galleries and cathedrals."

"And no courier has ever ridden more miles in his vocation than they have travelled, in search of the picturesque."

"But can't you get them separated, Dermod? Montague has no money, has he?"

"Not he; he's only a younger brother, and his father is alive. He is going to be a barrister."

"He'll not suit us, Dermod, my boy," said the Captain.

They went on discoursing in the same confidential manner a considerable time, so long that it might have been supposed that they had apartments there.

At length they came out into the street, O'Neill looking rather flushed and excited.

"Well, Brown, you've made a good thing of it to-night," said he.

"Yes," replied the Captain, "but I ought to have left off half-an-hour sooner. I think you also will be able to pay for another dinner at the Trois Frères with your two acquaintances, even if

the remittance from Iveragh does not come for a week or two. Good night."

"Good night, Captain."

Time passed pleasantly enough. The three friends were constantly together, and Courtenay and Montague also saw a good deal of their new acquaintance, Captain Brown.

* * * *

"Fred," said Montague, one morning, "I have had a reminder that I am only here on sufferance. This letter from my father bids me remember that I have to make my way in the world, and that I have only interrupted, not relinquished my studies. I am afraid we must say good bye to each other, and that as soon as possible. Read the letter."

"After this," said Courtenay, "I cannot press you to remain, sorry as I am that the pleasant time we have spent together has come to an end."

"The sooner I am off the better. I will leave to-morrow."

"I shall not miss you quite as much as I

I should have done if Dermod had not been here," said Courtenay. "But do you remark how grave and silent he has become? He never was very lively, but now he looks as if he had the cares of a nation upon him."

"He looks ten years older than he is."

"I suspect he frets about his father's affairs. It gave me much pleasure to have the opportunity of making him a present the other day."

"His acquaintance, Captain Brown, makes up for Dermod's silence and reserve. They came from London together."

"Yes, there is some indefinite degree of cousinship between them, I think."

"His stories are rather in the Baron Munchausen style," remarked Montague; "and I think both these and his language would be improved by being a little more disguised, to use no stronger term."

"Oh! there's no harm in him, depend upon it," said Courtenay, gaily. "I like him: he's capital fun."

The following day Montague left Paris.

CHAPTER XI.

Man is to man a' kinds of beasts ;—a fawning dog, a
thieving fox, a robbing wolf, a dissembling crocodile, a
treacherous decoy, and a rapacious vulture.

COWLEY.

VALERE—A gamester's hand is the philosopher's stone
that turns all it touches into gold.

HECTOR—And go'd into nothing.

MRS. CURTLIVER.

O, woman lovely ! woman fair !
An angel form's fall'n to thy share,
T'wad been o'er meikle to gie thee mair ;
I mean an angel mind.

BURNS.

THERE was given by Madame Cotillon, on a certain night, a very brilliant party.

Her friend, Captain Brown, introduced Courtenay to her, and the consequence was that

the young Baronet was presented with the freedom of her house in the shape of a highly-scented billet, which conveyed her request to him to be one of her guests that evening.

"Do you go to Madame Cotillon's to-night," said Fred to young Glenville, one of the attachés to the English embassy.

"No," replied the other with a smile, "I am engaged to attend a party given by the old Comtesse de Grenouille, in the Faubourg St. Germain."

There were several very ill-natured things said about Madame Cotillon. Some among the starched and tight-laced had routed out some libel about her, from the scandalous chronicles of Paris, which, of course, ought to have been suppressed long before. But everybody knows how much truth there is in a ream of such records; and, even if there had been the slightest foundation for the aspersion, it ought, in charity, long since to have been forgotten. Besides she was a widow (a very pretty widow, too), and, as such, ought to have met with respect and con-

sideration. Then, again, there were some reports—equally false, of course—that there had been some high play in her apartments, and some spiteful people went so far as to say, that after that sad business which ended in poor Fitzgerald's suicide, her house was under the surveillance of the police. How could people be so censorious and uncharitable.

Fred had heard these rumours about the fair widow;—but what had he to do with such nonsense?

So he went to her party that night: and a very gay and sparkling affair it was; and I would engage that the stiff and stately reception of the Comtessa de Grenouille, in her aristocratic and stupid *quartier*, was not to be compared with it.

Perhaps I might also venture to suspect that the merry sons and daughters of those clear-starched mamas, who tossed their heads at the pleasant laughing widow, would have very gladly left the Comtessa's sombre salons for Madam Cotillon's gilded and lightsome apartment.

Her music was excellent, her refreshments unexceptionable, her rooms spacious and convenient, and lighted with a brilliancy for which our neighbours are unrivalled.

Fred was rather surprised that he was acquainted with so few of her guests, but even he was not vain enough to think that he already knew all Paris, and, therefore, he supposed that he had got among a fresh "set."

Among others, was a very clever, witty, and original writer of romances. He had several in hand, as might be seen on reference to the *feuilletons* in the cafés; and, when Courtenay entered the room, Madame Cotillon was joking with him about some awkward adventure which one of his heroines had got into. But, with a laugh, she left him, and graciously welcomed Fred.

There was also present an English lady, reported to be very rich, with her two daughters, arrived, it was whispered, some said, direct from Liverpool, some said from Wigan, or Leeds, or Birmingham; her dress, a sea-green velvet and

crimson turban—no other, in fact, than our friend Mrs. Dobison.

By what stroke of diplomacy she had received the entrée of Madame Cotillon's apartments, or what motive the gay widow had in receiving her, I am unable to chronicle; but there she was, and there, too, were her fair daughters.

As soon as she heard the name of Sir Frederick Courtenay, she determined to procure a special introduction to him of herself and daughters. This she soon effected in reference to herself and Clementina, and she attempted to keep him in close conversation until Amelia should have finished her dance.

With this view, she commenced detailing to Courtenay some of the many misfortunes and perplexities which her ignorance of the language of the country had brought upon her, since her arrival on the continent. "Really, Sir Frederick," she exclaimed, pathetically, "it is so unpleasant: they would not even understand, the other day, that I wanted a plain

boiled egg. Who would dream of such a phrase as—as—dear me, if I haven't forgotten it again."

"*Œufs à la coque*," suggested Sir Frederick.

"To be sure: how stupid of me. But how odd it is that they should make their cocks feminine! I know that is the feminine article. Clementina showed it to me in the grammar."

Mrs. Dobison's philological observation drove Sir Frederick abruptly from her presence. He passed through some rooms where several more than one *parti carré* was engaged in sober silence at whist: but he could discern nothing, either in the manner of the players, or the amount of the stakes, to warrant the imputation he had heard against the character of the widow's apartments. No: he saw a few Napoleons changing hands; sometimes even less. Why should he suppose that any deception was practised, any more than he would expect a fifty pound match on a race course to be for a thousand, or *vice versa*?

"Ah! Sir Frederick," said Captain Brown, meeting him accidentally in one of the inner

rooms, "how do you do!—been here long?—met many acquaintances?"

"No, indeed, I have not."

"Then let me introduce you to two or three friends of mine."

The Captain immediately took Fred up to some gentlemen who were looking on at one of the card tables—Captain Tiffin, of the H.E.I.C.S.—Sir James Long Hardup—Mr. Handicap, the owner of the celebrated race horse Hocus Pocus; and then, passing into the principal room, did him the same good service there; and, during the evening, he asked Courtenay to give him the pleasure of his company at dinner, the following day, to meet a few of the gentlemen whose acquaintance he had made that night.

Fred went home with the innocent conviction that the reports he had heard of Madame Cotillon were only the inventions of ill-natured scandal-mongers, and that the widow was a very ill-used woman.

It is needless to detail the events which occurred at Captain Brown's dinner party, in

his comfortable, snug, unpretending apartment, where books, papers, a review or two, and a portfolio of well-selected prints, spoke of his pursuits, and proclaimed the man of literature and information.

Nor is it necessary that Sir James Long Hardup, or Captain Tiffin, or any other of the party should here sit for their portraits—all was good fellowship, good humour, simplicity, and ——“hypocrisy,” adds the reader.

Alas! it is true. Fred Courtenay has “fallen among thieves,”—and Dermod, his schoolmate, has been the decoy. It is a trite and every day occurrence, the ruin of a young man of fortune—the plucking of the pigeon, and there is little variety in the practice; for as long as birds are birds, grain must be thrown to lure them;—as long as fish are fish, they will not take a hook without a bait on it;—and as long as human pigeons exist, so long will they require a little solid corn to tempt them fairly within the trap.

I forbear, therefore, to repeat the sad record which we have all heard of or read, or sorrowed

over a hundred times, or watch the sad and quickening progress of one who, step by step, was to become a duped yet devoted gambler.

It was a few days after Captain Brown's dinner party that Courtenay met Captain Tiffin.

"I think, Sir Frederick," said the latter, after a cordial greeting, "that you are fond of smoking: let me offer you a cigar. This reminds me of my promise to take you to the best cigar shop in Paris, '*à la belle Indienne*' as it is called. Are you disengaged now?"

"Quite."

"Then shall we stroll so far? It is only in the Rue St. ——."

"With all my heart."

Let me proffer the same request to my reader, and let us precede Sir Frederick and Captain Tiffin.

The shop in question presented a frontage very mean in comparison with that of some of its gaudy neighbours. As is the case where tobacco, or what ought to be tobacco, forms the staple commodity, this shop was redolent of the

leaf in every variety and duration of fragrance. From it there was an exit into two or three plainly furnished rooms, which were appropriated to the use of those who came there to enjoy their narcotic amusement. Above stairs, the apartments were neatly and tastefully decorated. The shop just now is left to the care of a sharp, cunning lad—such youths are not unfrequently seen dispensing cigars and latakia, and their wits become keen from being “chaffed” by the fast young gentlemen whom they are in the habit of serving.

The owner of it—a widow—and her daughter, are in one of the apartments up stairs.

Mrs. Werther—a singularly unfortunate name for French tongues—was the widow of one who had held a civil appointment in one of the West Indian Islands, and had fallen a victim to an attack of yellow fever, leaving his wife and daughter almost wholly unprovided for.

I know not why she preferred the French capital to her native country, but, on leaving the West Indies, soon after her husband's death, Mrs.

Werther settled in Paris, opening a shop for the sale of that article of which she had acquired a knowledge in the country where it is produced; and, in a little time, the superiority of her merchandise, aided, perhaps, by the rumour of the surpassing beauty of her daughter, attracted many customers.

She herself was still handsome. Her stature—exceeding the average—was striking and commanding; her dark eyes were brilliant, her features were large, and the whole expression of her countenance was imposing though somewhat forbidding.

Beatrix, her daughter—or, as she was always called, Beatrice—was formed after the same model as her mother, but was less in height, and all her features were more delicate and softened. Perhaps, too, the tropical climate, where she had been born and passed her childhood had tinged her cheek with a darker dye. As a brunette, she was faultless, and well deserved the appellation—by which also her mother's shop was distinguished—of “la belle Indienne.”

The mother and daughter are seated together. The latter has a note in her hand which she has just opened.

“Look here, mother,” she says; “am I not a pattern of filial duty and confidence? That young coxcomb at the Embassy, Mr. Augustus Tenderhart, is beginning to pester me with his effusions,—a mere boy, and yet he talks of ‘unalterable affection,’ and says ‘he never felt his heart so completely besieged’—ha! ha! Why he cannot have had a month’s experience since he left school. I tell you what, mother; I’ll marry Sir Harry Sinclair’s son, if it is only to get rid of such puppies as the writer of this precious production. Bah!” throwing it into the fire, “how it smells of scent! I would rather have the fumes of the shop down stairs.”

“You will not marry Sir Harry Sinclair’s son, Beatrice,” replied her mother.

“Why not? You know I have only to say the word. The least encouragement will bring him to my feet again.”

“Nonsense, child. You would believe anything an artful tongue would tell you.”

"I do not see what objection you can have to Mr. Sinclair. He will, no doubt, return to Paris, for he was only advised to stay in the South a short time."

"You seem very well acquainted with his plans. However, it matters not what my objections are; it would be reason enough that he is far too much above you in rank."

"Why should I not raise myself if I can, mother."

"You know, Beatrice, as well as I do, that you do not care for him any more than he really does for you. I know, moreover, that there was not a greater *roué* in Paris, and it was quite time that he should leave, for neither his debts nor his health would have allowed him to remain here much longer."

"I dare say he was not a bit more extravagant than other young men of rank and fortune."

"I assure you, Beatrice, I am sometimes tempted to close the shop, and go away to some quiet place, St. Omer, or Dunkirk, or Heildelberg, for your head is turned with all the non-

sense you hear. If you talk of marrying, there was Mr. Ploddington—”

“What! a clerk in a bank! an automaton! a calculating machine! a drudge, that has to work I don’t know how many hours a-day, leaving his wife to darn his worsted stockings in a room, *au septième*, with nothing in it but two or three wooden chairs and a table; or, for a pleasant variety, to prepare the *pot-au-feu* for his dinner! Marry Mr. Ploddington! I like the notion. How well I should look with a saucepan in one hand and an iron spoon in the other. No, no, I’m not going to marry any of your good, respectable, worthy hard-working clerks.”

There is the sound of a small bell.

“There is that shop bell again,” says Mrs. Werther; “I suppose the shop is filled with the *vauriens* and do-nothings of Paris, whose sole occupation is to smoke cigars, admire themselves, and talk nonsense to such pretty fools as you are.”

“Shall I go down to the shop, mother?”

“I wonder you are not too proud to show yourself behind a counter.”

“My curiosity is greater than my pride just now, and I want to see who may be added to the old *habitués* of the shop, for they say Paris is filling fast, and that there will be an excellent season. Shall I go?”

“No, child: I must try to take care of you, if you cannot, or will not, take care of yourself.” The boy had rung the bell to intimate the arrival of more customers than he was able to attend to.

Among them, were Courtenay and Captain Tiffin.

It so happened that some one came to the private door of the house immediately after Mrs. Werther had left her daughter, and the latter went down stairs to give her mother the message which had been brought. She could not help casting her eyes round the shop to see who of the gay gallants of Paris were occupying it, but a reproachful and angry glance from her mother made her retire before Captain Tiffin had got beyond the “Ah! Mademoiselle,” of his intended address.

"By Jove, she's a splendid creature, isn't she, Sir Frederick?" whispered Tiffin. "But I suspect she is pretty closely watched by that she-dragon of a mother. Did you see the look she gave her. She used to be in the shop constantly, but I suspect she is caged above stairs now, for she very seldom makes her appearance."

As Courtenay and Tiffin went out into the street again, the latter raised his eyes to the windows above the shop. "There she is, Sir Frederick. What a shame to keep her mewed up there all day."

"Who was that gentleman with Captain Tiffin, mother?" asked Beatrice, when Mrs. Werther returned to the room up stairs. "He was a very good-looking man: an Englishman, I should think."

"How should I know, child? Besides, what is it to you?"

However, the wayward, wilful Beatrice found out before very long that the good-looking Englishman (who now came very often to the shop to buy cigars) was Sir Frederick Courtenay,

whose arrival at —— Hotel she had seen announced in the newspaper.

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The season was passing by, but its gaieties had become of little interest to Courtenay, who, when he did appear in society, was no longer noticed as the joyous, light-hearted being he was a few months before.

No doubt the pigeon would, ere long, have been completely plucked, to the full satisfaction of Sir James Long Hardup, Captains Brown, Tiffin, and Co., had not an event happened, which, as the faithful compiler of a veracious biography, I am bound to relate.

I shall, however, take leave to do so as rapidly as I can; nor adopt as my model the narratives of the Proteus-like *feuilletonist*—Madame Cottillon's guest—who would have deemed the following incident in Fred's life an admirable opportunity for the display of his powers of detail.

CHAPTER XII.

“Great Heaven! how frail thy creature man is made!
How by himself insensibly betrayed!” PRIOR.

“Thou hast—

Stol'n the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gaws, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness.” SHAKSPEARE.

THERE had been a late but severe frost.

Courtenay was hurrying home one day, when, at the corner of the Rue St. ——, he saw a lady crossing from one side of it to the other. The water-course in the centre of the Rue St. ——

was frozen and partially covered by a sprinkling of snow.

There was a carriage driving rapidly up the street. As the lady attempted to cross before it, her foot slipped on the ice, and she fell. Fred sprang forward to save her from the danger of being run over, and was in the act of lifting her up, when the pole of the carriage, which the horses were unable to stop struck him with considerable force, and brought both him and his charge to the ground.

The horses had been sufficiently checked to prevent their advancing further, and no more injury was done. Courtenay was able to rise, though the effects of the blow made him stagger.

He then discovered that the person he had sought to rescue from danger was Beatrice Werther.

She was more frightened than hurt; Fred was much the greater sufferer. He insisted, however, upon seeing her safe home: and it was well that Mrs. Werther's abode was at no great distance, for, before he reached it, he felt very faint; and

he had barely heard the beautiful brunette detail the circumstances of the accident to her mother, with the warmest expressions of her gratitude and thanks, than he saw the cigar boxes and meerschaums multiplied around him, and, like a host of glittering figurantes, performing infinite varieties of pirouettes, entre-chats, cabrioles, and many other strange saltatory movements, after which the curtain seemed to drop on the performance—for Fred, in plain words, had fainted.

When he came to himself, he found Mrs. Werther bathing his temples with vinegar, and her daughter looking excessively frightened. He was able, before long, to return home, though he felt a good deal shaken.

La belle Indienne would, no doubt, have deserved to catch the small pox, and lose her beauty, if she had not been very grateful to Courtenay for having rescued her from an accident. She felt thankful to him; and even the “she dragon,” as Captain Tiffin had called her mother, could hardly find fault with her anxiety to learn that the ill effects of the

blow which Courtenay had received in her service were passing away.

After this occurrence, Fred smoked even more cigars than he had done before it (he always bought them at Mrs. Werther's, they were so very superior), and he seldom left the Rue St.—without changing either a few words with the dark beauty in the shop, or receiving a gracious smile from her at the window up-stairs.

After a month or so, there were more than one of Fred's notes in Beatrice's desk, the key of which she would rather have died than have given up: and a very pretty hoop of emeralds and opals, and a very handsome bracelet which Courtenay had taken a fancy to in the Palais Royal, had found their way into the same little desk.

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A strange rumour was one day heard in the Cafés of Paris, that La belle Indienne had broken her cage and flown away, and the report went still farther to announce that the gallant who had lured the pretty bird from her home was Sir Frederick Courtenay. The intelligence caused a

considerable sensation among the fashionable smokers of Paris; and Captain Tiffin paid an early visit to the Rue St—— for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of the report. He found Mrs. Werther's shop closed, and the blinds drawn down in the windows up-stairs, as though a death had occurred there.

Madame Rimolade, who lived just opposite, and one of whose *brioche*s the Captain purchased as an excuse for going into her shop, informed him that poor Madame Werther was ve-ry ve-ry ill, that her naughty coquette of a daughter had really departed with a *vaurien*, that the ungrateful hussy had left a billet on the table—the first thing poor Madame Werther saw when she came down in the morning (how she could have had the heart to write it, Madame Rimolade could not imagine); and that the poor mother was quite distracted, and her pitiable and terrifying, cries could be heard in the street—and that she was not left for an instant, for fear she should throw herself out of the window.

All this, and more, Madame Rimolade detailed

to Captain Tiffin, on the authority of Madame Werther's *fille de quartier*.

To make all sure, Captain Tiffin went round by Courtenay's hotel. He was there informed that Fred was not in, nor was it known where he was, but that he had not given up his rooms. Very little doubt was left in the Captain's mind of the entire truth of the report, and he returned to Captain Brown's apartments, where O'Neill also was.

"It is quite true," said he, as he entered.

"The d—l it is," exclaimed Captain Brown.

"Ay, the jade has left her mother, who has gone raving mad."

"And the worst of it is," continued Brown, "that we have not yet pumped Courtenay dry."

"What a horse leech you are, Brown," answered Tiffin; "I think we have bled him pretty freely."

"You my depend upon it," said O'Neill, "Courtenay will be back again, before many months. Fred cannot be constant to anything; he must have change."

"Confound it," said Tiffin, "the jade has spoiled our game anyhow."

"It was you that introduced him to her, Tiffin," said Captain Brown.

"We have to thank you for our loss."

"As for that," replied Tiffin, "he might have been off long ago if I had not thought of some attraction for him. There's plenty of play to be had in other places. Depend upon it, it was not bad policy to give him something to think of, beyond, our society. Have you any of his I. O. U's., Brown?"

"Not one: he was the best pay I ever met. He must have had plenty of ready money."

"I don't possess one, either," said Tiffin, "and I'm not sorry for that, for, if I mistake not, he has got an expensive companion now."

"I must find out where Courtenay is," said O'Neill; "it will never do for me not to know where to get my bills cashed."

"What do you mean, Dermod?" asked Captain Tiffin. "Is not the per centage we give you on our winnings sufficient to satisfy you?"

“Have I not told you,” replied O’Neill, “that Courtenay made me promise to apply to him whenever my purse ran low? And do you think I am fool enough not to keep up the practice sufficiently to prevent his thinking I have other resources? I saved his life once—it was the luckiest day of mine—and I am not going to let his gratitude die for the want of being exercised. So I send him a note now and then to tell him I am particularly hard up, or I show him my tailor’s bill, or complain of the high price of lodgings. That’s what I mean by getting my bills cashed.”

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For some weeks, no one knew what had become of Courtenay. At length, Dermot got a letter from him, with the request that he would make enquiries respecting Mrs. Werther, and let him know how she had borne her daughter’s desertion of her maternal home. Fred desired that the answer might be directed to him at a small town in the Pyrenees, but begged Dermot not to let any one know the address.

The letter was evidently written by Courtenay,

in a state of great excitement, and it was very short.

Dermody had the grace to comply with Fred's request. He found that the effect upon Mrs. Werther's mind had been so great, that, although her constitution had rallied from the first shock, and from the fever which had succeeded, she continued violent and raving, and the probability was that madness, incurable madness would be the result of her daughter's flight.

These and other particulars he transmitted to Courtenay, who, in the hope that the evil had been exaggerated, did not mention to the guilty cause of it all the details which Dermody's letter contained.

Fred wrote again immediately to O'Neill, sending him a cheque, and begging him to get it cashed, and to apply the money as he thought best for Mrs. Werther's benefit.

O'Neill executed the commission at the bank, but parted with only a portion of the sum, thinking it was not prudent to give it all up at once; besides, he was expecting a remittance from Ive-

ragh, and, therefore, he would keep the remainder of the money till his own arrived: it was very convenient for him just then to be his friend's almoner.

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Some months passed; no improvement in Mrs. Werther's condition took place, and she was transferred to one of those institutions provided for such as have sustained that greatest of all misfortunes, the loss of mind.

Thus, from the day when Captain Tiffin sought to verify the disappearance of *La belle Indienne* by applying to Madame Rimolade, the cigar shop was open no more, and, at the sale of its contents, the gallant Captain, whose financial affairs had been latterly improving, laid in a considerable quantity of the poor widow's regalias and cheroots, "for it will be a long time," he observed, "before I can meet with such first-rate merchandise; indeed, I consider Mrs. Werther's retirement a public calamity."

I promised that I would not delay long upon this sad period of Courtenay's career.

For a time, Fred strove to banish all reflection: perhaps, too, he rather prided himself on the sensation he must have made among the young men in Paris; still he was sincerely grieved at the injury which Mrs. Werther had sustained. Nor could even his infatuation make him blind to the unfeeling manner in which Beatrice received the intelligence of her mother's illness,—even though she might not fully understand how serious it was. The beautiful creature did not hear the sad news with indifference, but its effect was short-lived, and did not make her less careful, when she went out walking that her mantilla should sit gracefully on her shoulders, and that her bonnet strings should be without a crease.

Gradually, Fred's better nature began to prevail, and reason and reflection to have more and more weight. The impression became by degrees stronger on his mind, not only that he had been guilty of a great crime, but also that he had committed an egregious folly. He found that Beatrice possessed no embellish-

ments of mind and heart to match her extreme personal beauty. Nature, prodigal of the latter, had been churlish with the former;—a more frivolous, uncertain, vain creature was never formed.

The report of Courtenay's proceedings had come, in time, to Montague's ears, and Harry had written to him immediately, under cover to O'Neill. The first reply which Courtenay made to him was flippant, and made light of Harry's sober earnestness. But Fred was not a hypocrite, and, when the cloud began to clear off his reason and his conscience, he could not bear to practise deceit towards his oldest friend; and, rather than write what he did not feel, he let Montague's letters lie unanswered, though they were not unread.

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Courtenay passed the summer months among the beautiful scenery of the Pyrenees, but the thousand charms of that ever-changing region had no delight, no interest for him. Fred was too young in the ways of vice not to feel ill at

ease and unhappy. He had been a few days at Bagnères de Luchon, and his lively companion, who had been rallying Fred upon his stupidity, had prevailed upon him to accompany her upon an excursion to the Port de Venasque.

The ascent of the mountain had been duly accomplished, Fred had feigned a certain attention to the guide's *patois*, and had beheld the snow-capped Maladetta and the untrodden glacier—what occupied his thoughts?

No doubt Fred was more sensitive (“for sensitive, read muffish,” says my friend Prigge,) than a great many of his gay acquaintances in Paris and elsewhere would have been: already sorrow and remorse were in his young heart; and, great as he knew would be the ridicule to which the act would expose him, he was very seriously occupied with the intention of making what amends he could to both Mrs. Werther and her daughter. “What! perpetrate matrimony!” says Prigge, who thinks no more of an *affaire de cœur* (except as a boast) than of cheating his tailor, or “bilking” a turnpike. It might be a very fool-

ish and unusual meditation for a young man to make, but such actually was Courtenay's as he stood in the midst of the magnificent works of God; such, in fact, had been the subject of his thoughts for some weeks. Laugh, ye young "men about town!" sneer, ye ancient heroes of a hundred broken hearts and blasted reputations! Sir Frederick Courtenay had almost resolved to marry Beatrice Werther, the tobacconist's daughter! She had felt for Courtenay as much attachment, perhaps, as so fickle a heart as hers was capable of; and it is but due to our vain friend to say, that he was very likely to inspire love and admiration. He was handsome, and more than handsome, for his countenance was expressive, and his manners engaging. La belle Indienne had lived in such an atmosphere of coquetry and self-esteem, vanity and frivolity, adulation and deceit, that neither her mind nor her heart were capable of receiving any very deep impression; but her nature was such that the impression, though faint and superficial,

would never be lost, and, like characters written in sympathetic ink, would be renewed by circumstances. Perhaps she needed that harsh master, sorrow, to settle her unstable mind, and fix the all too-fleeting emotions of her inconstant heart. In after years, would not her earliest memories be the strongest? They are not unfrequently found to be so.

Courtenay and Beatrice were returning home from their excursion, and had just passed that part of the descent of the mountain where the sudden, violent gusts of wind which so frequently occur have given rise to the proverb that "the father must not tarry there for his son, nor the son for his father," when they met a party of gentlemen ascending.

Courtenay was in advance, and had not his mind been pre-occupied, he might have noticed one of them in particular. He was a tall, dark, handsome man, but of delicate appearance, and with the unmistakable air of a *roué*.

As he passed, he took off his hat and bowed

to Beatrice ; the colour mounted into her cheeks but she returned the salute with a gracious smile.

That evening Courtenay went out and remained away till late into the night. The moon, with her pale, steady light, looked down upon him, the stars were bright in the cloudless vault above him, the trees stirred not, and man and beast slept quietly around him ; all seemed at peace but his young heart.

When he returned home, he found that Beatrice had not retired. She complained of his long absence, and, with pouting lips and a flushed face, she accused him of treating her with coldness and neglect. He was sad, and ill at ease, and but little disposed to make excuses, or feign a warmth he did not feel. They parted ; one in anger, the other with coldness, sorrow, remorse.

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The grapes hang ripe upon the bending vines, and light is the laugh and jocund are the voices of the vintagers as they look up, for a moment, at the travelling carriage that passes rapidly by.

Sir Frederick Courtenay is in it—alone.

His mind is at least relieved from the anticipation of the unhappiness to which his sense of duty and justice had condemned him; for La belle Indienne has left him: he knows not what has become of her.

Where she is, the handsome son of Sir Harry Sinclair alone can tell.

CHAPTER XIII.

To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants follow'd to complain and pay.

CRABBE.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom that parting day
That called them from their native walks away;
Where the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bow'rs and fondly look'd their last.

GOLDSMITH.

The letter which Dermot O'Neill himself has carried to the post office, the night after his brother's wife had so prematurely breathed his last, arrived safely at its destination.

It was perused with the utmost interest ; but no part of it was communicated to Mr. O'Neill, That very morning he had heard of the sad

fate of his son, and grief, remorse, and pride by turns, held mastery over him. He had lost his child, the pledge of his early happy love, and he is deeply grieved—he had treated that child and that child's wife, harshly, cruelly, and, therefore, he felt remorse ;—but then came pride, and it told him, as it had done before, that his paternal authority had been outraged, that his son had been rebellious, and that he had only repelled from his house her who had been the cause of his son's rebellion against him.

He shut himself up in his room, and sought no consolation from others. He became a sadder but not a wiser man, and the reflections which ought to have had a chastening influence upon him served only to make his deportment to those around him more harsh and morose.

* * * *

It was Mr. O'Neill's rent day. For some years it had been his custom to present himself, with his agent, to give audience to his tenants ; but his motive for doing so was not to yield assistance or redress wrongs.

The season had been unfavourable, and some of the tenants had been unable on this occasion to make up the full amount due.

Among those who had suffered severely from loss of stock and crop, was one whose name has been already introduced, Mc'Grath. After laying down the money he had brought, he pressed earnestly for a short time during which he might endeavour to make up the deficiency.

"It's been a sore sayson, yer honor," said the farmer, who was one of the few old dependents remaining on the estate, "an' it's not in the power o' mortal man to raise the good crap, if so be it plazes the Almighty to send us such a time as it has been."

"What is the amount deficient," asked Mr. O'Neill, addressing his agent who was counting the money.

"Nearly the half short, sir."

"But sure," resumed Mc'Grath, "yer honour won't mind bein' out o' yer due for a month or two ; an', wid the help o' God, I'll be able to fat

an' sell the bastes before long ; anyhow, I'll make up the remainder before the next rint day."

"McGrath," replied Mr. O'Neill, "a man has no business with a farm if he cannot meet an occasional bad season without falling into arrears."

"It's thirty year an' more since I came to live on yer honor's property, an' sorra day have I ever been behind hand wid the rint, barrin' this wanst. An' yer honor will plaze remimber that the rint was riz when the lease was renewed."

"McGrath," said Mr. O'Neill, "I have had occasion to be displeased with your son. It was not long since he was convicted of poaching, and I have my suspicions that he is not cured."

"I know, yer honor, that Jamesy suffered for what another did. Sorra snare or wire Jamesy ever set in his life."

"It is no use denying it, McGrath, your son was convicted. With regard to your rent, you are considerably in arrear. I give you a month from this time to make up the deficiency. If you do not pay the whole by that time, you quit your farm."

“It’s worse than useless to thry,” exclaimed the poor man despairingly: “a week would be as likely a time to make it up in as a month, but I hope yer honor—”

“I have done with you, McGrath; send in Moran.”

How often, in every variety of form, have the acts of harsh Irish landlords met our eyes! One has been merely a copy of another; the only difference being in the scale of harshness, from merely compelling a tenant to part with his stock or crop at a certain loss, to those scenes of eviction and extermination where the picture is made up of wretched cabins, unroofed and destroyed, and their squalid occupants crouching in ditches, or scattered on the road side; here a bed-ridden woman, stretched on the damp earth, for the wretched pallet has been taken from under her helpless limbs; there, the work of consumption, hastened by the rude blast of a wintry wind; here, the chattering idiot, gazing with vacant stare at what he understands not; while the heartless agent looks on with indifference, and thinks not of the

vengeance of Heaven, nor of the night bullet of the scowling man whom he has made desperate. But it is to be hoped that such scenes exist only in the records of an era that is past.

It was with a heavy heart that McGrath retired and rejoined the rest of his fellow tenants. They crowded round him to know how he had fared.

"It's all over wid us," said he sadly: "God's will be done."

"It's he that has the hard heart," said one.

"A month, sure," exclaimed another, "but it's just the way Mick Donovan was sarved. You mind it, don't you!"

"Ay, ay!" replied McGrath, sorrowfully, and he sat down on a bench and rested his elbows on his knees, and his grey-haired head on the rough hard hands that had laboured so long and to so little purpose.

I need not narrate how McGrath sacrificed his property, and appeared on the appointed day, a month afterwards, and laid down his money, and left the room without a word of bitterness, though

he was about to leave his home, a bowed and broken-hearted old man.

But though the old grey-headed man was silent, a deep dark curse rose from the young heart of the son who had accompanied his father to the door.

McGrath was ruined, and a letter which Dermot received from his mother shortly afterwards, announced to him the agreeable fact that her promise had been kept, and that another tenant occupied McGrath's farm.

Dermot had been long absent from home, but his father had never expressed himself anxious for his return, and Mrs. O'Neill, who had discovered that her husband had not become more attached to her child since Charles' death would not advise the young man to re-visit Iveragh. She was apprehensive that her husband's harshness and ill-temper, which might prove so galling as to overcome the self-interest and craftiness of her son.

Dermot therefore remained absent from Iveragh, and we have seen how and with whom he occupied his time.

CHAPTER XIV.

By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam.

SHAKSPEARE.

Straight,
As if some dreadful vision had appeared,
She started up, her hair unbound, and with
Distracted looks, staring about the chamber.

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Trembling in every joint, her brows contracted,
Her fair face as 'twere changed into a curse,
Her hands he'd up thus, as if her words
Were too big to find passage thro' her mouth.
She groans; then throws herself upon her bed,
Beating her breast.

MASSINGER.

SIR FREDERICK COURTENAY continued his journey back to Paris with feelings very different from those with which he had left it.

He did not intend to make any lengthened

stay in the French capital, as, by doing so, his vanity might run the risk of no small mortification; for he, the rich, the agreeable, the irresistible Fred Courtenay had been very unceremoniously discarded, and he knew full well that he must be the laughing stock of his acquaintances, who might not always in his presence check the sarcastic joke or conceal the sneering smile.

There was one errand, however, upon which he was bent, and he lost no time in accomplishing it.

Courtenay might have sought out Dermot, but that young gentleman, after exerting his talents in London during a part of the summer, had deemed that it might be to his benefit to pass a short time among the German spas; and he was accordingly visiting one of them when Sir Frederick reached Paris.

The morning after his arrival, Courtenay proceeded along the Rue St. ——. A strong influence, a kind of fascination brought him to the shop formerly occupied by Mrs. Werther.

It was now tenanted by a glove maker. Sir Frederick went in and asked for a pair of gloves. A drawer-full was produced, and, while he busied himself with trying on a pair, he noticed, with bitter retrospection, the alterations which had taken place in the shop.

This reflection occupied him so much that he almost forgot the gloves, and the attention of the fair vendor was called to what she considered the extreme awkwardness of her customer.

"Monsieur will never succeed in making them fit," she remarked at last.

"No, I believe I shall not," said Fred; "these are too small; give me another pair."

"Pardon, Monsieur; there is a great art in making fit a pair of gloves. Excuse me, Sir," and she took possession of Fred's hand, and commenced an artistic process of fitting on the gloves. "Monsieur should always put on the fingers first; like that, see you, and then the thumb will slip in quite easily. But these are a little too long; this pair will do better. I have sold a great many to your countrymen;

they have no want to talk French here. I could not hinder myself to laugh one day: a lady came in; she wished *des gants de fil d'Ecosse*, *et elle demandait des gants de fil de cochon*: it was so droll."

The fair *gantiere* went on chattering, a little French and a good deal of English (such as it was), for she was very proud of her proficiency in the latter language.

"There," she continued, "I was sure Monsieur's hand would take a glove not more large. Monsieur is well *ganté* now; and I hope that, for the future, we shall have the honour of your patronage. We are not long time in this *magazin*. It was at other times that of one of Monsieur's countrywomen, poor Madame Verter."

"Ah! what of her?" asked Fred, unguardedly.

"She had a daughter, beautiful as an angel—Monsieur does not perceive the smell of tobacco," said the little woman, mistaking the motive which made Fred turn abruptly round.

“Oh! dear, no,” replied Courtenay.

“Oh! I thought it might still be perceptible,” continued the *gantiere*, “for Madame Verter sold the cigars. And all the young men had custom to come to smoke and talk. But her daughter—ah! it was a bad girl.”

“Yes, yes,” said Fred unwittingly, “but what has become of her mother? How is she now?”

“Oh! Monsieur knows, then, how she left her mother, and escaped with one of those *vauriens* that were always paying her compliments. Poor Madame Verter! she will never be better. Oh! if that monster that took away her daughter was to be of return, and that he could see and hear the poor mother, day and night, to cry and demand her daughter, perhaps he would blush of his crimes.”

In all probability the little woman would have become more earnest in her invectives, but a servant girl came into the shop. She had lived with Mrs. Werther, and had remained in the house when it was taken possession of by the *gantiere*.

The girl had begun to deliver the message to her mistress, when she recognised Courtenay, and, of course, thought it necessary to scream. Fred, too, remembered the girl who had, as he once considered, done him a service occasionally, by taking charge of some of his billets, and not knowing what might be the consequence of the recognition, he hastily went out of the shop, leaving both his gloves and the money he had paid for them upon the counter.

Great, no doubt, was the astonishment of the *gantiere* when her servant informed her who her customer had been; and when she found that she had been denouncing the monster to the delinquent himself, her hopes of his future purchases in her shop vanished altogether.

Fred proceeded to the establishment where he ascertained that Mrs. Werther was in confinement.

With considerable difficulty he procured admittance, and was conducted to the cell which she occupied.

At the end of a long passage his guide opened

a strong door leading into a cell. The light was admitted through a small window at the top of it; and, although from its height the precaution appeared needless, the aperture was closely and strongly barred. The walls, for about eight feet from the ground, were thickly padded. There was no furniture in the room but a low bed. It had the appearance of a cell of a criminal, almost of the lair of a wild beast

Its unfortunate occupant—the mother of Beatrice Werther, was seated on the bed. An iron girdle was round her waist, and was attached by a chain to a staple in the wall. Her hands were bound together. Her hair had been closely cut, but had grown again, and was several inches in length. Instead of being black as the raven's wing, as it was a few months back, it was very grey. Her cheeks were ghastly and sunken, and her eyes, once so full, seemed shrunk, and glared with an unnatural light from their hollow sockets.

“My God!” exclaimed Courtenay, half aloud, “and all this is my doing.”

She seemed to take no notice of Courtenay and his conductor when they entered, but kept swinging herself backwards and forwards, or more usually, from side to side with a wearisome and monotonous motion, and, occasionally, with a howl, rather than the cry of a human being, repeated the words, "My child! they have taken my child. Cruel! Cruel! Give me back my child!"

The spectacle turned Courtenay sick and faint; nor was it only what he saw and heard that unnerved him, for he felt with bitter remorse that there would come upon him a day of heavy retribution. For awhile he leant against the padded wall. Neither he nor his attendant had spoken to her. Courtenay had been cautioned not to say a word to her on any account, as speaking to her generally increased her violence.

At length the monotonous motion of the maniac ceased, and was succeeded by a twitching of the muscles of her face, and an uneasy restlessness of her limbs. She bent herself down, but, at the same time, elevated and threw back

her head by a powerful muscular action; the veins of her neck became swollen, and her eyes were fixed. Her breathing was at first hard, then seemed to cease; her eyes kindled with some unspoken emotion, and glowered upon Courtenay for the space of, perhaps, half a minute.

Suddenly, with a terrific howl, and the bound of a tigress, she leaped to within a yard of where he was standing. "'Tis he!" she shrieked, "'tis he!" and she gnashed her teeth in the impotence of her fury; for, although she strained her arms as though she would have torn them from their sockets, their fastenings held strong and tight.

In an instant the keeper's hand was upon her, and he drew her back, but not harshly nor roughly. "Yes, yes," she muttered, it seemed to Courtenay, with prophetic vengeance, as she slunk back to the bed, and crouched down upon it like a foiled tigress.

There she remained, without voice or motion, for a short space, then she rose from her abject position, and drew herself up to her full height,

regaining by the action the character of a human being, though her stature seemed above that of an ordinary mortal.

She fixed her eyes again upon Courtenay, who stood regarding her with both a look and feeling of anguish, horror, and pity. She then pronounced with a painfully distinct and emotioned voice—and it sounded not as the voice of one otherwise than sane—these awful words—“May your wife be faithless to you, Sir Frederick Courtenay; may she be false to you, soul and body; and may no child of yours ever bear your name; may a curse cleave to you and yours,” and she raised her voice, “the curse of one you have made a childless mother;” then the poor maniac became violent again, and she shook her chain like a furious wild beast, exclaiming, “for it was you that stole away my child—Oh! give me back my child, my child!” But presently, as if she became aware that all efforts to break her bonds were unavailing she strove no more with them, her unnatural stature seemed to shrink, and voice and figure

diminished, as she sunk back upon the bed, reiterating these words—"My child! my child!"

Courtenay felt riveted to the spot on which he stood; he would have spoken but for the strict injunction he had received, and, the attendant urging him to depart, with the utmost grief and horror he left the cell.

Before Sir Frederick left Paris, he took every means in his power to ensure the kindest and best treatment of the unhappy maniac.

With a sad heart he proceeded directly to England. He had but just arrived in London, and was walking along Oxford Street, when, strangely enough, he met Montague. As it often happens, in the great currents that flow backwards and forwards in our great thoroughfares, they had almost passed each other amid the crowd of busy pre-occupied pedestrians.

"Harry!" cried Courtenay, holding out his hand.

"Fred Courtenay!" was Montague's exclamation; "are you ill?—have you been ill?"

"Come along with me, Harry, my old friend,"

said Courtenay, not answering the question, "I want you ; I was going to seek you. I have just come to town. I must speak to you freely and frankly. Oh ! Harry, that we had never parted !"

The two friends left the thoroughfares, and walked arm in arm through one of the parks. Then Fred confided to his old schoolmate the details of what I have briefly narrated, and, when he came to the scene in the madhouse, most deeply, painfully even, did he reproach himself for being the cause of it, and, sitting down on a bench, Fred Courtenay wept bitterly.

"Harry," he said, "I feel that I am a different being from what I was when I was with you last. That curse, that dreadful curse, is always on my mind. She haunts me ; I turn round sometimes and almost think that tall, scowling woman is beside me. At night I am more nervous, more shattered. My struggles wake me as I fight with her in my dreams. That look those glaring eyes, that curse, I shall never forget."

Montague saw from his friend's haggard look

how strong the impression was that had been made upon him, and knew not how to comfort him.

Courtenay pressed his friend to accompany him to Lowick, for he felt how unequal he was to bear the solitude of the place. Inconvenient as it was to him, Harry did so, but it was impossible for him to remain there long.

When left by himself, Fred was indeed what he told Harry he should be, a very moody being. He missed the kind benevolent face of his guardian, and yet he felt a satisfaction that the old man had never known his follies and crimes. Sometimes he suffered from extreme depression of spirits, at other times he felt a craving for excitement which no country amusements nor pursuits, neither the hunting field nor the pheasant covert, could satisfy.

On these occasions he not unfrequently hurried up to London, for, although it was then what is called the dull season of the year, he could always find in the metropolis plenty of *rouge et noir* and hazard.

Fred had made a tolerably complete confession to Harry respecting his more serious delinquencies, but, although he could not conceal from his friend that he occasionally played, nor that he had incurred losses in Paris, he yet, with that feeling which "makes us ashamed of our vices but not of our crimes," was not inclined to make even Harry his confidant in every particular.

CHAPTER XV.

“Cupid and my Camaspe played
At cards for kisses, Cupid paid.
He stakes his quiver, bows, and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows ;
Loses them too, then down he throws
The coral of his lip ; the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how),
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin ;
All these did my Camaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes ;
She won, and Cupid blind, did rise.
O ! love, has she done this to thee,
What shall, alas ! become of me ?”

LYLY.

IN the recess formed by an oriel window in the very pretty drawing-room of a country-house, two sisters were sitting together engaged on a work of tapestry.

They were both gifted with no ordinary share

of beauty, but Mary De Lorme was provided with every requisite from Cupid's armoury.

No description of beauty is capable of doing justice to it; for who can mark in words the thousand varying expressions, the creation of the heart and mind, which mingle in fitful forms upon the countenance :

" Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray ? "

I might sketch Mary De Lorme as a model of symmetry and grace, with lustrous brown hair, a fair complexion, clear as crystal and softly tinted as Nature paints the first faint blush of the summer morning's dawn, eyes full and bright, such as Homer gives to Minerva the *βοώπις* 'Αθηνᾶ; but how describe the roseate hues of blushing bashfulness, the joyous laugh of confiding innocence, the sunny smile, the mild and melting look of tenderness and love? Add too what has been curiously called "*la beauté du diable*,"

" Alas! a witch at seventy-nine
Is nothing to a witch at twenty."

Pshaw!—Mary De Lorme was not to be de-

scribed nor painted, for "the best part of beauty is that which a picture cannot express:"—so says Bacon, and that settles the question.

Perhaps I could succeed better with her sister's portrait; this I am not going to try. She was dark, her features were larger, their expression more decided, brilliant, and showy, but not as changeful as her sister's. Julia would first attract notice in a ball-room, Mary would make more conquests ere she left it; Mary seemed to have no thought of self, Julia to consider homage only her due; Julia might claim to be admired, but Mary was made to be loved.

"I have got some news for you girls," said a lady, entering the room where the sisters were working; "you must take your frames to pieces, and get yourselves ready to start for Leamington."

"For Leamington, Mama!"

"Yes; Dr. Hellebore has just been here, and he says the climate here is too cold for your papa during the winter, after his late illness;

and he recommends the change to Leamington as soon as possible."

"And when are we to leave?"

"In a few days, and I suppose you will not break your hearts because you have to spend the winter in a gay and fashionable place."

"No, indeed, Mama," said Julia. "Marlington does seem dull now: no balls, no parties to enliven us; no society beyond what one meets at some stupid dinner, where the ladies seem to confine their information within their own parishes, and the gentlemen talk of nothing but tile draining and country business, poaching, and the price of wheat."

"What do you say, Mary; have you any objection to the change?"

"None for myself, Mama; but I was thinking that Charley will not be pleased at our leaving Marlington. You know his leave begins next week, and he was enjoying the thoughts of getting some good shooting."

"I don't think Charley will mind," said Julia. "After that out-of-the-way place he has been

quartered in, I fancy he will be glad of a little gaiety. We shall take our horses, I suppose; shall we not, Mama?"

"I really do not know."

"Oh! pray let us, Mama," urged Mary. "The rides are so beautiful about Leamington. Mr. Montague, whom we met in London, said so much about them. How Felix will be admired. We must indeed, have our horses; and it will be delightful to have Charley to ride with us."

"Well, I will speak to Mr. De Lorme about them."

"How glad I am," said Julia, when Mrs. De Lorme had left the sisters alone together, "how glad I am we are going to Leamington. I was getting moped to death. The country is all very well in the summer for a time, but in the winter it is so dull; one must have some society."

"And a little weekly gaiety too."

"You don't mind the dulness, Mary. It would not surprise me to see you, some of these

days, doomed to solitary confinement in some out-of-the-way country place, the wife of a wretched younger son, with fifty pounds for your pin-money, and yet making yourself happy in spite of your cotton gown and imitation lace."

"Perhaps I should not make a better poor man's wife than you would, after all; though, to be sure, I do not know that I should be miserable, even were I to don a cotton gown, provided always that it fitted well."

"I wonder," resumed Julia, "who we shall find at Leamington; if there will be any one there we met in town during the season. We do not know any one who lives there."

"I remember hearing Mr. Montague say that his aunt had a house in Leamington."

"Oh! then, Mary, you may see him again. Come, you need not blush so, though I know quite well that you liked him."

"Well, Julia, perhaps I may have thought him a pleasant and agreeable person; but then," she added, laughing, "he is only a wretched younger son."

“That is all, indeed,” replied Julia, “and a very great objection it is. Don’t you think Lizzy Lovegrove has found out, by this time, how foolish she was to say ‘no’ to Sir Benjamin Nugget, and ‘yes’ to poor Charley Cushat? How dreadful it must be to vegetate, as she has to do, all the year, in a little country town! having, as she wrote us word, to put up with the ill temper of the half-pay captain’s wife, because she neglected to give the said lady precedence over the doctor’s or the lawyer’s spouses, and glad to eat her Christmas dinner at her brother’s, the Baronet, with the rest of the poor relations, and thankful for a couple of rabbits or a pheasant from his preserves.”

“Poor Lizzy!” said Mary. “But after all, she could not be blamed for not accepting Sir Benjamin; she could not bear him.”

“At all events, he was a baronet, and she would have had more pin-money than all poor Charley Cushat’s income amounts to. She would have gone to town, and had her own carriages and horses. The Nuggets are a good family too.

She would not have been marrying merely for money. I never would marry for money only."

"Nor without it," said her sister.

"Well, Mary, be sure and keep the fear of the cotton gown before your eyes; but that will not be ghost enough to frighten you. Reflect, moreover, that you may not have a maid clever enough to make it fit. Neither Madame Canezou, nor Mademoiselle Pelerine would fancy a cotton gown being seen in their show rooms."

"It would look rather odd and out of place there," said Mary, laughing.

"But perhaps," resumed Julia, "Mr. Montague, or some other equally charming younger son, might be able to discover a *modiste* who undertakes to make cotton dresses, and on terms to suit the finances of their wives."

"You seem to be quite sure of your own heart," her colour a little heightened by her sister's bantering: "who knows, perhaps we may meet your Irish friend at Leamington. Come, it is my turn to catechise you a little," she added,

the slight expression of annoyance passing into a very arch smile.

“Well, Mary,” replied her sister, “you cannot say that he was not good looking, far more so than Mr. Montague, and I think quite as pleasant, though he could not sing the songs you used to rave about. I wonder why neither papa nor mamma liked him; at Mrs. O’Sullivan’s ball, the night before we left town, papa would hardly speak to him, and mama was positively rude.”

“So I suppose you thought it necessary to make up for their coldness.”

“Nonsense, Mary.”

“Perhaps they thought his attentions to you a little too marked. Papa said that his father’s property is heavily encumbered. No doubt papa knows that a cotton dress would not suit you.”

“I don’t believe a word of it. I am sure no one seemed so live in better style, and one day I heard all about his father’s place, Iveragh Castle, on the Western coast of Ireland, with such a magnificent view from the windows.”

“Mr. O’Neil was very communicative, and I

dare say, very pleasant, though, to my fancy, there was something about him I did not like. I never felt sure that he was saying what he felt, and——”

“Really, Mary, that is rather too bad. Why should you say that Mr. O'Neill is deceitful?”

“Forgive me, Julia,” said her sister, kissing her; “I was wrong, very wrong, it was only my foolish fancy.”

“Well, I don't suppose it matters much what you think of Mr. O'Neill,” said Julia, rather pettishly.

“Forgive me, Julia dear, for vexing you. And come, we have been talking a deal of nonsense, let us have Pinstick up, and see what dresses we had better take to Leamington.”

Mary twined her arm around her sister's waist, and they went off to inspect—*auspice* Pinstick, their very clever maid—the contents of their wardrobes and presses, and make preparations for their departure from Marlinton.

Leamington was quite new to the De Lormes, and the girls were quite charmed with it.

"Guess, mama," said Mary, as the two sisters entered the drawing room after a walk with their brother, "guess whom we have seen to-day. No less a personage than Mrs. Dobison and her two daughters. We met them on the parade, and she told us that she has taken a house here for six months, one of the largest and best in Leamington."

"So I suppose," added Julia, "we shall have the red turban hoisted again. You remember it, mama, I am sure you must, at old Mrs. Cromuntite's crush in Lowndes' Square. It was there that some one saw her trying so hard to get into the supper-room, and remarked of the never-failing head-dress that it was

The flag that braved a thousand years,
The crushing and the squeeze."

"I remember hearing she was well known by it," said Mrs. De Lorme.

"I wonder," said Julia, "how she managed to get the *entrée* of some of the houses in London. Lady Zenith and Mrs. Paramount both had the Dobisons at their balls."

"Oh! they are not the only people who contrive to step over the boundaries of exclusive society."

"The Miss Dobisons looked taller than ever," said Julia.

"Charley admired them excessively," remarked Mary.

"Yes," added Julia, "but he is quite at a loss which to prefer."

"Oh!" said the young officer, "the ass between the two bundles of hay, I suppose, saucy one."

"Were they walking when you met them?" asked Mrs. De Lorme.

"When we first saw them they were driving," replied Mary, "and we could not imagine who was bowing to us, as we waited at the crossing to let the carriage pass."

"And such a carriage!" continued Julia; "its panel was literally covered with an immense coat of arms, with all sorts of scrolls around it."

That shield, I should observe as the veracious narrator of the private memoirs as well as of the public history of this worthy family, had

been the origin, once or twice, of an incipient altercation between Mr. and Mrs. Dobison. I must interrupt the conversation to chronicle how this happened. We know that names have been derived from certain peculiarities. That, for instance, of Rome's most illustrious orator was owing to the successful cultivation of a vegetable. Such a practice does not, however, seem usual now; and it would certainly to us seem strange if some fortunate agriculturist who had, we will suppose, doubled the produce of an acre of turnips, should therefore be styled Mr. Purple-topped Brown, or if the inventor of a useful implement should, as he receives the prize of the "Grumbledon Agricultural Society," be hailed as Mr. Clodcrusher Jones, or Mr. Chaffcutter Robinson. In heraldry, the case is more frequently reversed, and the name suggests the armorial bearings, as do also the occupation or trade of the postulant for its honours.

Mr. Dobison, the father of our excellent acquaintance, was the first of the family who sought from "the science of vanity" an appro-

priate coat of arms. This he did in the meridian of his prosperity, and when his ledgers and banking book might have warranted such a pretension.

The arms were accordingly chosen with reference to the Heraldic principle I have just mentioned; and accordingly the business which had secured for Mr. Dobison the wealth which he now sought to illustrate and dignify, suggested the charges, the crest, and the motto. Wherefore, Mr. Dobison in due course of time was declared entitled to bear for arms three wool or cotton packs argent in a field gules; for crest a smoking chimney; and for a motto, the words, "Non sine fumo." The learned suggester of this coat of arms, in selecting the colour of the field had remembered that the origin of the word gules is, by some thought to be the Hebrew word "gulade," signifying red cloth; none could be more appropriate for one whom that material with others of a similar nature had helped to lift so high.

The motto was not perhaps fraught with such

evident meaning. It might be considered a symbol of independence, and that a man might make as much smoke as he liked; (there was not so much said then about manufacturers consuming their own smoke) or it might have been intended to suggest the conclusion that the pageantry of wealth is not attained without the grime of labour and industry.

Now Mrs. Dobison's worldly wisdom (our Mrs. Dobison, I mean,) took fright at the public avowal of the origin and trade of her husband thus blazoned to the world by the three cotton bales argent and the smoking chimney, and would fain have substituted for the crest some more martial and less suggestive object, a griffin, for instance, or a lion in any form, couchant, passant, rampant, gardant, or regardant. The motto she did not quarrel with, though after her visit to Paris, she proposed a change to "*en avant*," or '*toujours prêts*' with the idea that the Dobisons should be and were always ready to push on. But her suggestions were not approved of, Mr. Dobison always declaring that he was not

ashamed either of his origin or his arms, and once he rather sharply asked his wife where the money came from which filled her winged wardrobes with silks and satins, and her larder with venison and Norfolk turkeys, if not from those wool bales and that chimney? So Mr. Dobison's plate continued to bear the objectionable crest and the carriage panels to display the wool bales argent on a field gules, the smoking chimney, and the "Non sine fumo."

Return we now, after this digression, to the De Lorme's drawing room.

"What a nice old lady Miss Montague seems," said Mary, "she was at the library."

"And we overheard her say," said Julia, rather maliciously, "that she was expecting her nephew down at Christmas."

"I will go and take off my bonnet and shawl," said Mary.

"How it has made your face flush, Mary, coming into a warm room, after being out in the town," remarked her sister.

Mary was very soon out of the room, and

followed by Julia; upon whose face the wind and change of temperature had not produced the same effect; but then she was much darker, and hers was much less likely to flush than Mary's fair complexion.

In a short time, the gay town was very full. The hunting season was at its height, and many scarlet-coated gentlemen were seen, almost every day, leaving or re-entering its streets.

"Let us look at the arrivals," said Mary, one morning, as the servant brought in the newspaper.

"Come, Julia, there is one name at least that you well know; look here, in the list at the Regent, are Mr. O'Neill and Sir Frederick Courtenay; I have heard Mr. Montague talk of the latter. They travel together, and Mr. Montague spoke of him as his greatest friend. I wonder if they are like each other."

Before long, Mary had an opportunity of judging, as she met Sir Frederick Courtenay at a party. Mrs. Dobison and her supporters were also present.

The worthy lady was very assiduous in presenting cards of invitation to such young men as were introduced to her, and was standing with a pack of them for distribution, rather after the fashion of certain individuals to be seen in the thoroughfares of London who are employed in offering to passers by announcements of, "immense sacrifice," "family pills," "great bankruptcy," when Sir Frederick entered the room.

"Oh! Sir Frederick," she exclaimed, pouncing upon him, "how do you do? We are old acquaintances; I had the pleasure of meeting you at Madame Cotillon's party. How I doat on Paris! Have you been there lately, Sir Frederick?"

Courtenay felt a little embarrassed at the recognition, for he doubted Mrs. Dobison's discretion too much not to fear that, if she were acquainted with the follies of his career in Paris, their history would soon be generally known throughout Leamington. The good lady, however, made no sly insinuations, and I do not think that

his having run away with a whole tribe of Belles Indiennes would have disqualified him in her eyes from making a very eligible and excellent son-in-law.

Fred was, however, a good deal disconcerted, and was turning away, when Mrs. Dobinson detained him with—

“Sir Frederick, we are going to give a ball on the —th, and it will give Mr. Dobison and myself great pleasure if you will join our party on that day.”

Fred bowed.

“Allow me to give you a card,” she continued, drawing one from the pack; “the —th, Sir Frederick.”

“I shall be most happy,” said Courtenay, taking the gage, and preparing to make his retreat.

“Sir Frederick, you must allow me to introduce my daughter Amelia to you, Clementina, you know, was your dancing partner in Paris.”

The introduction took place, and the anxious

mother, with the flattering vision of a possibly more permanent partnership, saw her daughter and Sir Frederick join the dancers.

I must here explain how Courtenay and O'Neill came to be at Leamington.

After remaining at Lowick some time, it became apparent to Montague that Fred's state of mind and spirits quite incapacitated him from enduring the solitude and monotony of a country life, a conviction which was strengthened by the increasing number of Courtenay's visits to London. Henry therefore proposed to him to remain for a time in some place where he would be less dependent on his own resources for amusement, and where society and the conversation of others might weaken the impressions of the past, and make him less inclined to yield to the morbid indulgencies of his own reflections. Montague had promised to spend the Christmas vacation with his aunt, in Leamington, and Courtenay was easily persuaded to choose the same town for change of scene, and to take his horses with him to finish the hunting season there.

Dermod had always contrived to be acquainted with Courtenay's movements. After the gambling tables at the German Spas began to be deserted, he had returned to England, and had, latterly, found it convenient to spend a short time at Lowick; and he had accompanied Fred to Leamington.

A short time after their arrival, Montague left London, anticipating a little the Christmas holidays, with the intention of visiting his aunt.

Once more, therefore, the three schoolfellows were together.

They were strolling one day down the Parade.

"What two very handsome girls there are walking this way with the officer," remarked Fred.

"Ah! the Miss DeLormes," said Harry: "I am acquainted with them."

"You may as well introduce me to them, Harry," said Courtenay.

The young ladies came up, and between Montague and one of them, at least, there was a very cordial greeting. An introduction took place

between Courtenay and the young ladies and their brother, and they stood, for a minute or two, talking together.

“To my fancy,” said Fred, as they moved off, “the tall one is the handsomer of the two.”

“Perhaps so,” was Montague’s reply.

Leamington is one of those places where there is every facility for increasing an acquaintance and forming intimacies. If the weather is fine, everybody meets, or may meet, in the few places of resort: even if rain and snow hold undisputed possession of the air, and cause the streets and gardens to be deserted, still there is the nightly party or ball, where snow and hail, sleet and rain, are alike unheeded.

There the half hours slip away like minutes, and little heed is given by anyone in the heated rooms to the poor fly horse and his driver outside. There they are, the old hunter grown stiff and slow, the once cherished favourite, whose bed was as warm, and whose clothes were as plentiful as his master’s, standing benumbed

between the shafts of a fly, of which he seems almost an equally inanimate part, and the shivering driver, who locks and unlocks his arms, and runs over to the nearest tap for something to keep the cold out, while the gay gentleman whom they have brought to the ball, is wiping his forehead, and eating ices, with the thermometer in the room at 90°.

O'Neill had been received but coldly by Mr. and Mrs. De Lorme, but Courtenay and Montague became gradually more intimate with the family. Julia had evidently made a very favourable impression upon Fred, but the effect was not to the full extent, at least, reciprocal.

This, however, Fred was not the man to see, nor was he likely to admit, even to himself, that any motive beyond mere politeness or courtesy ever induced her to transfer her attention from him to another—Dermod for instance. Oh! no, Fred was much inclined to think himself invincible.

Montague was much more diffident, and with far less reason, for, if the truth must be told, and

in plain terms, Mary De Lorme liked him very much, as two or three blushes, which my readers may have noticed, will have discovered.

Owing to Mr. and Mrs. De Lorme's coldness towards O'Neill, he was apparently less intimate with any of the family than Courtenay, though he had been longer acquainted with them; besides which, his characteristic closeness, caution, and impassiveness always masked his feelings. Nor had he been very long in Leamington, when he received a letter from his mother, urging him to return home.

As, however, he thought it best to keep the motives of his departure, which took place a day or two afterwards, a secret from his friends, we must be content to wait till the events of the future disclose them.

Montague's suggestion that Courtenay should seek in the society and amusements of Leamington, a relief for his depression of spirits and nervousness, had already proved successful, and every day he was regaining, more and more, his natural activity and cheerfulness.

Perhaps the principle that "like cures like," had a good deal to do with the improvement. It often has in peculiar cases. Is not a cure often sought for the overwrought heart, by renewing or increasing its action—with the change only of the moving power?

CHAPTER XVI.

Swallow, a poor attorney, brought his boy
Up at his desk, and gave him his employ.

* * * *

But his young Swallow, gaping and alive
To fiercer feelings, was resolved to thrive.

* * * *

Let's part in peace, and each pursue his gain
Where it may start.

CRABBE.

It was not a hunting day, and the Parade at Leamington presented, in consequence, in the afternoon, a greater choice than usual, of such specimens of the lords of creation as were wont to disport themselves upon it; for the impossibility of meeting any pack of hounds made it a *dies non*.

Some had considered it a good opportunity of making up such arrears of sleep as late hours at balls and parties had caused, and, therefore, had devoted the entire forenoon to their slumbers. Some few had spent an hour or two at the tennis court or billiard rooms; but about two o'clock most of the young men had left the various resorts to which the attractions of broiled bones, tea, soda water or cigars, billiards or tennis, stables or saddler's shops had drawn them, to refresh themselves in the open air, and while bracing their limbs by an invigorating saunter from bridge to church, at the same time to exercise their minds—after the custom of the Peripatetics—by brilliant conversation, and the exchange of keen and sparkling wit.

Among the pedestrians who were, about this time, lounging down the Parade, were two young men proceeding very amicably arm in arm.

One was a young, very young looking man. He appeared, indeed, to be not more than eighteen

Summers older than his beard
And that was born last week—before its time;

but, in reality, more than one year had elapsed since that magic day which had made him

Free to act

For self—free, namely to contract

Engagements, bonds, and debts.

His costume was not a little conspicuous. Trowsers of the widest and gaudiest check pattern—a waistcoat, the length of which, a few years since, would have been admitted fair legal evidence of its belonging to a stable helper, from the lowest button-hole of which depended a massive large-linked watch-chain from which dangled a multifarious cluster of pendant articles—the diminutive models of gold cannon, and coral slippers, and bronze anchors, and silver bedsteads, and jewelled horse-shoes, and enamelled umbrellas, cruet-stands of amalgam, steam-engines of pinchbeck, beer-barrels of ivory, with a row or two of quaint little entities bearing the generic term of “charms”—boots of the brightest polish—a tie, which has been happily likened to the cross stuck on the neck of a goose addicted to trespassing (I forget if the simile

includes the wearer of the tie)—and a coat of the widest sleeves, formed the principal items of the furniture of the very elaborately got up George, Lord Ravensclint, heir-apparent to the baronial castle, the ancient pedigree, the broad though mortgaged acres, the long rent-roll, and the heavy list of balancing liabilities which now formed the known and unknown possessions of his father, the Right Honourable the Earl of Graspmorland. The utmost art of the hair-dresser could infuse no curl nor vigour into his lank, lustreless hair,—his limbs were thin and weak,—his complexion sallow,—his lips almost without colour,—and in his large, inexpressive, blue-milk-tinted eyes, there was perhaps more blood visible than in his pale cheeks.

His companion was altogether of a different stamp.

He was, apparently, a good deal the young nobleman's senior. His frame was powerful, and closely knit, but not above the average height—his features were rather coarse and lebeian,—and his costume betokened an indif-

ference to his personal appearance, for his coat was a rough shooting jacket, and he wore thick iron-heeled shoes.

The two companions might suggest the idea of a strong thick-set mastiff coupled to a young rickety greyhound, not yet convalescent from the distemper.

There seemed, however, to exist between them quite an intimacy, and the young nobleman leaned upon his companion's arm in an attitude of confidence and dependence.

" 'Pon my honor, Tom," said Lord Ravensclint, in a thin drawling voice, " I'm reg'larly used up. They say old Swillum's champagne is undeniable, so I suppose it cannot be that; but I'm doocedly bewildered this morning, my head feels like a furnace."

" You want a pick-me-up," said his companion. " Have some soda water. Come, we'll turn into Coltsfoot's. He'll give you a bottle of soda water, with a little essence of ginger in it. Here's his shop."

Whilst the renovating beverage is being pre-

pared and imbibed, it may be as well to devote a page or two to the previous history of the individual whom Lord Ravensclint has familiarly addressed as "Tom."

He was the son of a respectable solicitor—Mr. Hardman—who lived in a small town in Wales, and he was destined by his father to carry on a business which the worthy gentleman had spent many years of diligent and persevering toil in securing.

Accordingly, after leaving school, (where Master Tom certainly never achieved distinction for anything but insubordination and idleness) he passed some time in his father's office. But the engrossing of deeds, and the drawing up of leases, marriage settlements, and mortgages, were as thoroughly distasteful to him as had been the perusal of Cicero's "De Officiis" or Xenophon's "Cyropædia."

At first, the father shut his eyes to Tom's remissness, and trusted that time—which is said to work wonders—would at length discover Tom's character moulded into the proper legal form

Alas! Tom's repugnance to the business increased. He took every opportunity to absent himself from the office, and his high stool would remain for days unoccupied.

To make matters worse, not only did the worthy solicitor perceive that his son had no liking for his profession, but, to his infinite horror, he discovered that Tom had a decided partiality for dogs and horses, of which some very fair specimens in *basso relievo* might be seen on Tom's desk, executed during those hours which had been supposed to have been dedicated to "Chitty on Contracts," or "Woodfall's Landlord and Tenant."

It also came to Mr. Hardman's ears, that a certain journey, undertaken ostensibly for the transaction of business, was, in reality, made for the purpose of reaching a racing meeting at which Tom had so forgotten himself and the sobriety of his profession, as to neglect the sheep-skin for the pig-skin, or, in plain language, to ride a race.

A further proof of Tom's propensities became apparent to his father, upon going one day into

his son's room to look for a book which had been mislaid. The first thing that met Mr. Hardman's eyes, was a flaming print of a horse and jockey, over the fire-place. "Oh! good law, good law!" he exclaimed, (this was the solicitor's favourite and appropriate adjuration) "why Lord Eldon used to hang there." But so it was: the worthy man's patron saint had been displaced to make room for the winner of the last year's "Derby." After another "good law" or two, Mr. Hardman looked round in the forlorn hope of finding the book. In a corner, were a number of volumes, bound in legitimate legal calf, and entitled "Ruff's Digest."

The title was not familiar to the solicitor, and thinking it might be a late and lucid exposition of some branch of legal science, and indulging a grateful hope that Tom might, after all, be going, as the anxious parent had often trusted and expressed it, "to turn over a new leaf," he took up a volume and opened it. Great was his disappointment, disgust, and horror, when all he saw was a catalogue of races and racehorses, trainers

and jockeys, and the only approximation to anything legal in it—and that seemed like an outrage upon his valued profession—was a page or two devoted to “the laws of racing, betting, &c.” Then, to crown all, there was a sacrilegious perversion of legal phraseology in the title, for “Ruff’s Digest” was in reality “Ruff’s Guide to the Turf.”

“Oh! Tom, Tom!” exclaimed the indignant father, “it is no use hoping any longer. That I should have such a son,—one who could exchange an honorable profession—for—what?” And the irate parent, at a loss for words sufficiently expressive of his injured feelings, with the attitude and look of the steward in the warning picture of the “Rake’s Progress,” left his unworthy son’s apartment.

Tom had, early that very day, gone off to a race-meeting not far from home. On his return his father met him with more than usually serious looks, but Tom had been very lucky, and had come home with a pocket half full of sovereigns, and, perhaps, with a little too much champagne.

"I wish to see you in my private room," said Mr. Hardman, coldly.

Tom followed his father into his study or office,—the very sanctum, the inmost penetralia of the legal divinity.

"Thomas," began the father, with a voice and manner befitting the place and occasion, "I am sorry to find that you are addicted to pursuits which are quite incompatible with what I had trusted would have been your permanent profession: I mean—hem—" and he stopped as if the mere mention of them was a disgrace; "I mean—racing—or, as I believe, you are pleased to term it, the Turf. It is not to be supposed that my clients will be satisfied that their affairs should be conducted in an office where there is one who neglects his profession to seek after running horses, and who associates with a set of disreputable, cheating—greylegs. Hush, sir. (Tom was about to correct the term); now I must insist upon your entirely giving up your present habits and pursuits, or else I shall be under the necessity of signifying to my clients—publishing,

in fact—that you are no longer even admitted into the office, and that their affairs will not henceforth be liable to be discussed by jockeys and greylegs.”

“Depend upon it,” said Tom, very flippantly, “those individuals have something far more interesting to discuss.”

“Stop, sir,” resumed Mr. Hardman, “I have another condition to make. You have in your possession certain books—catalogues of places of resort of horses, and jockeys, and greylegs.”

“Blacklegs, sir,” interrupted Tom, “if, as I suppose, you wish to use the offensive term applied to betting men.”

“You have, moreover,” continued the father, not noticing the correction, “impudently given a legal title to those books, in order to deceive the eye, perhaps to delude the unwary. Now these books must be burnt.”

“Burnt!” exclaimed the young man. “Why, I only bought them the other day. I couldn’t

at that time afford to get the 'Calendar' It's a capital work; there's a Spring, a Summer, and an Autumn series."

"So much the worse."

"I have just had them bound, too."

"So I suppose; and entitled 'Ruff's Digest.'"

"But they may be of great service to me. They are capital for reference. They may help me to no end of money."

"They'll help you to the penal settlements. You will never make a shilling by them, or anything they refer to."

"Come, come," quoth Tom, with a smile, his hand at the same time diving into his pocket and re-appearing with a number of sovereigns; "do you call this nothing? I made it all to-day; and I'll engage it's a better day's work than ever you had yet. Come now, what do you think of that for a profession? Let's hear—honour bright, now—eh? old fellow." And Tom, very familiarly, but in all good humour, and with a good deal of triumph, gave the re-

spectable solicitor, his father, a good hard slap on the back, adding, "Conjurer was a tremendous pot for the Corkscrew Stakes."

Mr. Hardman was a good deal astonished, first, at the sight of the money; secondly, at the concussion down his spine; thirdly, at the strangeness and freedom of his son's phraseology; but he recovered himself, and continued, "I will give you till to-morrow morning to decide upon your line of life,—and I trust that your decision will be the right one. If not, depend upon it, I will act as I have threatened."

It is not difficult to anticipate what that decision was. Henceforth, Tom's sojourn under the paternal roof was very limited, and he became a constant attendant at every racing meeting of importance in England.

Fortune smiled on her votary, as if in recompense for his slighting the staid and demure divinity of law. Hardman made some lucky hits, and established for himself a certain position in the "ring."

It was at the Doimbrown spring meeting that

Hardman first met Lord Ravensclint, and he was not slow to perceive that he might turn the acquaintance to his own advantage. By giving him more liberal odds than the rest of the betting fraternity, Tom secured his lordship's first entries in his "book;" he put the young nobleman in possession of some private information, which, proving correct, raised him wonderfully in his Lordship's estimation; and when the aristocratic better had brought the contents of his "book" into hopeless confusion, Tom took it off his hands—for a consideration. Step by step, he contrived to ingratiate himself so far in Lord Ravensclint's favour that he became at length thoroughly intimate with him—his Lordship's shadow—(physically, the reverse would be more appropriate) "a dooced useful feller," as the young nobleman called him, and, as far as constant companionship went, his Lordship's *alter ego*.

Lord Ravensclint and Tom Hardman were types of those two classes of men into which "Elia" has divided mankind, "those who borrow and those who lend; the former," he adds, "the

superior; the latter, the inferior race." His Lordship's weak intellect and delicate constitution marked him as a probable victim—Tom Hardman's shrewd head and iron frame, betokened the beast of prey. Such, briefly, were the antecedents of the rough plebeian-looking individual whom we left with his titled "pal" in Mr. Coltsfoot's shop.

"Well, my Lord," asked Hardman, "are you better now?"

"Why, yaas, I think I am," replied his Lordship.

"Come then, we'll have a stroll, and I'll engage you'll be wound up by night for Mrs. Dobison's party."

Lord Ravensclint listlessly and languidly put his thin white hand upon the muscular iron arm of his companion, and thus walked, or, more properly, crawled down the Parade.

Besides Lord Ravensclint and Tom Hardman, there were many other couples and triplets of young "fast" men, sauntering up and down the Parade to kill time.

With some of them, there was interchanged, in passing, merely a nod of recognition, or the newest slang phrase, or a choice quotation from some elegant vocal performance, or the latest *bon mot* or most successful *morceau* in vogue on the London cabstands: some stopped, for a moment, with a remark on Lord Ravensclint's "seedy," or "weedy," or "shady" appearance, and then moved off, for his Lordship was not gifted with brilliant powers of conversation or repartee, and Tom Hardman was not a favorite, and was somewhat looked down upon.

During one of those brief interruptions of their walk, the heads of the party were all suddenly directed one way, like a cluster of sunflowers. The reason of this was, that, turning from a parallel street, there appeared coming towards the group, two ladies and a gentleman on horseback.

"By Jove," said one of the young men, "that's a stunning girl on the chesnut."

"And a devilish handsome horse too," added Hardman.

“Who are they, Eustace?” said the first speaker; “they bowed to you.”

“Ay, tell us who your fair friends are,” said another.

“They are the Miss De Lormes. I met them, the other night, at Lady Girandolés. You were there, were you not, Ravensclint?”

“Yaas, I think so; pon honor, I forget; I don’t think I was.”

“Will they be at Mrs. —— what’s her name’s to-night?” asked one.

“Do you mean Mrs. Dobison’s? Are you going? And you Kingly? Why, I believe all Leamington will be there; I suppose the Miss De Lormes will have been invited.”

“Where are you bound Ravensclint?”

“I’m sure I caa’nt say.”

“Ravensclint’s felt himself rather squeamish,” said Hardman. “He found old Swillum’s champagne last night a knock-me-down, so we’ve been to Coltsfoot’s to get a pick-me-up, and now he is trying what air and exercise will do for him.”

“ Hang it, Ravensclint, come and have a game at billiards. It will make you forget your headache.”

“ No, I could not make a stroke; but if Hardman will play, I’ll lay you five to four he beats you.”

“ Done,” said the other.

The party moved off with quickened pace:—the quarry was sprung—an object was in view—slow time was given the go-by..

There was an unoccupied table at the billiard rooms: the two antagonists proceeded to take their coats off and select their cues, and Lord Ravensclint threw himself on a bench, and stretched his long thin legs upon it, and let his arm drop loosely over the back, as he settled himself to watch the game.

CHAPTER XVII.

Nunc pede libero
Pulsando tellus.

HORACE.

Away they go, about, and about, and about—"About what, sir?"—
About the room, madam, to be sure.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

THE note of preparation for the approaching ball had been sounded through the spacious mansion of the Dobisons, and the whole house was in the most approved state of that discomfort and disorder which precedes and follows such festive gatherings.

That state is probably familiar to most of my readers, and, therefore, I forbear to chronicle how—as in a man of war preparing for action—

all the appurtenances and comforts of ordinary domestic life were sedulously stowed away in bed-rooms, and closets, and Mr. Dobison's dressing-room, and the principal portions of the house so denuded as to be almost reduced to their *quondam* state of "unfurnished apartments."

But on the morning of the eventful day, men came with long, narrow hard benches, and ranged them round the drawing room, in very mockery of its poverty, and then bundles of evergreens were tossed out of spring carts and festooned—bah! it was like decking a skeleton—round the naked walls. And the house seemed the common property of the confectioners and their boys, and the Miss Dobisons were hard at work all day tying bouquets of laurel branches and holly, and Mrs. Dobison did the work of a gang of prisoners on the tread-mill, in ascertaining from kitchen to garret that her property was effectually concealed, and that of Messrs. Comfit, Truffle, and Chalker properly disposed.

Poor Mr. Dobison was chased from room to room, like a hunted hare, now confronted, on the staircase, by the end of a bench propelled upwards by some hidden motive power, now encountered in his exit from the dining room by a detachment of white aproned men—like French *sapeurs*—in single file, their heads surmounted with a great variety of grotesque and curious constructions, including white walled pagodas of blanc-mange with pink pinnacles, sponge-cake porcupines with almond quills, spire-sugar Gothic castles of an entirely new period of that style of architecture and one unnoticed by Rickman or Ruskin, and not realized by Barry or Pugin, surrounded with a moat of trifle, crouching rabbits of orange, setting hens of strawberry cream, couchant lions of calves' foot jelly; then, as he sought refuge in his own private apartment, arrested *in limine* and blocked out with all kinds of furniture, piled up in curious combinations. But why renew to my readers the horrors of such days?

The hours passed in tumult and discomfort,

especially to Mr. Dobison, who hastily and surreptitiously snatched an unsatisfactory luncheon in passing round the supper table, and here and there abstracting a biscuit or cake where he thought the theft would be unobserved. Dinner he did not venture to hint at, for, as the day wore on, the confusion increased.

To his supreme delight, however, Mrs. Dobison, about six o'clock, invited him into the housekeeper's room, and there the assembling of the family took place over a cold fowl.

This having been discussed in a hurried and agitated manner, the ladies retired to dress, and Mr. Dobison to wander like an unladen ghost over the house.

The family council was once more held in the evening, and they sat in the bare, cheerless drawing room, in a nervous and unsettled state, awaiting the arrival of their guests.

These, like the early flakes of a coming snow-storm, were at first few and scattered, but they soon came fast and thick, drifting in from all quarters of the town, till the street was well

nigh blocked up. The higher orders of society sent their representatives to the Dobison congress, as well as those nearer the sphere of the worthy host and hostess; for the difficulty which they had experienced in making their way into the Arctic regions of Aristocracy had been overcome, and Mr. Dobison's champagne and claret were imbibed, his daughters danced with, and his wife laughed at—in good society. And yet the ulterior motive of all their exertions seemed as far off attainment as ever, the Miss Dobisons were not even brides elect.

Mrs. Dobison's apartments were filled on that night with an extensive collection of such specimens of the genus "homo" as are usually collected at such menageries.

There were ancient spinsters and dowagers, forming the "wall-flowers," or "*tapisserie*" of the ball-room; there were young men and young ladies of average proportions, and appearance, and intellect, by the dozens—here and there one who, in beauty or plainness, height or diminutiveness, *embonpoint* or shoulder blades, varied

from the rest; here, one whose susceptible temperament might have often tempted him to say to his

Heart, between sleeping and waking,
Thou wild thing that always art leaping and aching,
What black, brown, or fair, in what clime, in what nation,
By turns has not taught thee a pit-a-patation ;

there, one who, even though she might have left her teens some years before, might still toss her head and sing cheerily to herself—

Je n'ai pas de cœur
Je ne m'en soucis guere
Car si j'avais un je ne j'aurais qu'en faire.

But a book has been written on the physiology of evening parties, and I would not be deemed a plagiarist.

For the hundred and fiftieth time, Mrs. Dobison's green velvet dress (she was partial to that colour, and exhibited it with much constancy in every variety of texture, velvet, satin, silk) had swept the floor, obedient to the welcoming courtesy of its owner ; for the hundred and fiftieth time Mr. Dobison had bowed low, with a "glad

to see you—” when, immediately following the announcement of his name, there appeared at the door of the principal room the ghost-like figure of Lord Ravensclint.

Again the green robe sank down, but lower, as beseemed the hostess of an earl’s eldest son, and a bachelor to boot ; again were the host’s dorsal muscles brought into action at the same time that the “very glad to see you, my lord,” was impressively and obsequiously pronounced. His lordship’s heavy eyes seemed suggestive of sleep, perhaps of a glass or two of wine which had better have been left untasted ; and, to judge from his totally inexpressive countenance, he appeared hardly to have made up his mind as to where he was or what was going on.

“Your lordship does us great honour in joining our party to night,” said Mrs. Dobison ; “we heard you had been slightly indisposed.”

“Yaas, a cold I got out hunting.”

“Your sport is likely to be stopped,” observed Mr. Dobison ; “it looked like frost this afternoon.”

“Yaas, so they said at the club; but I don’t care much ; for that feller Ellice lamed my best horse at Birdlime bottom, and——”

“Would your lordship allow me to introduce my eldest daughter to you?” said Mrs. Dobison, advancing with the fair Clementina in tow. “Clementina, my dear, Lord Ravensclint.”

A meaningless bow on the one side, and a smile intended to be damaging on the other, followed the introduction. His lordship then languidly suggested a quadrille—the young lady assented vivaciously, and was soon dancing with a real live bachelor lord, and doing her best to improve their acquaintance.

His lordship was not communicative ; moreover, he considered that to walk silently through a quadrille was all that could fairly be required of any man in a ball-room. The last figure had therefore been accomplished, and yet a very small amount of conversation interchanged.

“Do you waltz, my lord? murmured Miss Dobison, with a meaning smile, as, according to our insular fashion, she and her partner took a

turn round the room at the conclusion of the dance.

"No, it tires one, and makes one giddy," replied Lord Ravensclint.

"I think so too," said the young lady, who had hoped that his lordship's reply would have been just the reverse; "I really like a quiet quadrille best" (she had just, with her last waltzing partner, voted quadrilles a horrid bore, fit only for middle aged country squires and spinsters); "one is not able to speak a word in any other dance."

"You ride?" suggested the inventive imagination of Lord Ravensclint.

"We have not got any riding horses here," was the cautions reply : the real fact being that the young lady had never been on horseback in her life, and that Mr. Dobison's whole stud consisted of a pair of carriage horses jobbed by the month.

"Do you like the country, my lord?" asked the fair Clementina, with an artless and pastoral expression.

“Ya-a——”

“Oh! I doat upon it!” exclaimed she, enthusiastically, her eagerness to coincide with his lordship’s tastes causing her to interrupt his reply; “it is so pleasant to be among green fields, and to have a nice garden, with shady walks and sunny terraces.”

“Yaas, but I was going to say that I liked a town best; it is so dull in the country.”

“So it is; no balls, no parties.”

“No billiards, no clubs, no fellers to talk to.”

“No, indeed, nothing really agreeable in the way of society. Oh! a town is decidedly much nicer.”

After the establishment of this community of feeling, Lord Ravensclint, whose hazy eyes had been wandering over the room in search of Mrs. Dobison, having discovered that conspicuous lady, was leading his partner towards her, as he considered he had done his duty.

“Would your lordship kindly reach me an ice?” whispered Miss Dobison, still leaning

gracefully on Lord Ravensclint's arm, as a servant passed with a tray full of white and red prominences, like a *sierra nevada*, or a plan of the comparative height of mountains.

This was an artful feint to stop his lordship's desertion, and he was compelled to stand sentry beside the fair Clementina, while the pink glacier slowly, very slowly, disappeared.

His lordship's taciturnity was, however, on the increase, and his share of the dialogue was nearly confined to the enunciation of what are usually considered monosyllables, an occasional . "ya-as or "no," and he took the earliest opportunity of conveying the young lady back to Mrs. Dobison, who had not failed to watch and appreciate her daughter's manœuvres. The young lady withdrew her arm from his lordship's with a winning smile, which, perhaps, meant to say "for a time only, I trust," and Lord Ravensclint retreated across the room to join some acquaintances who had just come together to the ball after dinner and *vingt-et-un*. He had just come up to the party of men, who were clustered

round the door, when some other guests were announced, and the gentlemen interrupted their conversation, and stepped on one side as Mrs. De Lorme, her son, and her two daughters, passed into the room.

"These are the ladies that were out riding this morning, Ravensclint," observed one of the gentlemen: "they are a brace of deuced fine girls."

"Yaas, by Jove, they are," replied his Lordship, warming into something like animation; and, as he watched the greeting of the hostess, for once in his life, a purpose entered his head, and he bethought him that he should like to be introduced to them. The two sisters were looking remarkably well. I should make some dreadful blunder if I attempted anything with reference to their dress, but I know that it harmonized exactly with the characters of their beauty, which, like that of "the fair-haired Martha and Teresa Brown," whose charms inspired some of Pope's most charming verses, was distinct and dissimilar.

“They are the handsomest girls in the room,” said another of the party.

“You may call the dark one handsome,” replied the third, “but the fair one is extremely pretty, and that, to my mind, is higher praise. See, there is Courtenay asking one to dance, and Montague is off with the other. They will be engaged ten deep in half as many minutes. There’ll be no chance for us, Ellice.”

Lord Ravensclint had been standing silent, but his ears were open, and his eyes more so than they had been during the evening. He left the knot of gentlemen, and walked directly towards Mrs. Dobison.

She saw him advancing, and, coming forward, said to him, “I was just looking for you, my Lord, in hopes that you would allow me to introduce my second daughter, my daughter Amelia, to you.”

An exclamation of annoyance rose to his Lordship’s lips, but was changed into “with pleasure.” Then, like a blustering foaming steamer with her boat in tow, Mrs. Dobison commenced

making, I cannot write threading, her way through the crowd in search of her fair Amelia, with Lord Ravensclint behind her.

It was the broad end of the wedge going first, so they did not make very rapid progress, and they came to a standstill, not far from where Mary De Lorme happened to be.

His Lordship's courage rose, "Mrs. Dobison," he said, with more rapid utterance than was his wont, "will you introduce me to Miss De Lorme? She is standing close to you."

"Oh! certainly," replied the hostess, though a throb of jealousy shot through her maternal heart.

The introduction took place, and Miss De Lorme's hand was secured for a quadrille—anything requiring more exertion would have annihilated his Lordship—and they again started off in search of Amelia.

But why chronicle in detail the events of that night? Or, attempting a task more difficult than to distinguish every movement on a battle-field, narrate the thousand effects of which vanity or

self-interest, pride or deceit, envy or disappointment, fun or good humour, mirth or innocence, was the known or unconscious cause? The rooms were crowded with "fair women and brave men," the music was good, the supper splendid, and if the dancing was animated before, it was doubly so after it, for champagne will add brilliancy to the brightest eyes, and elasticity to the nimblest feet.

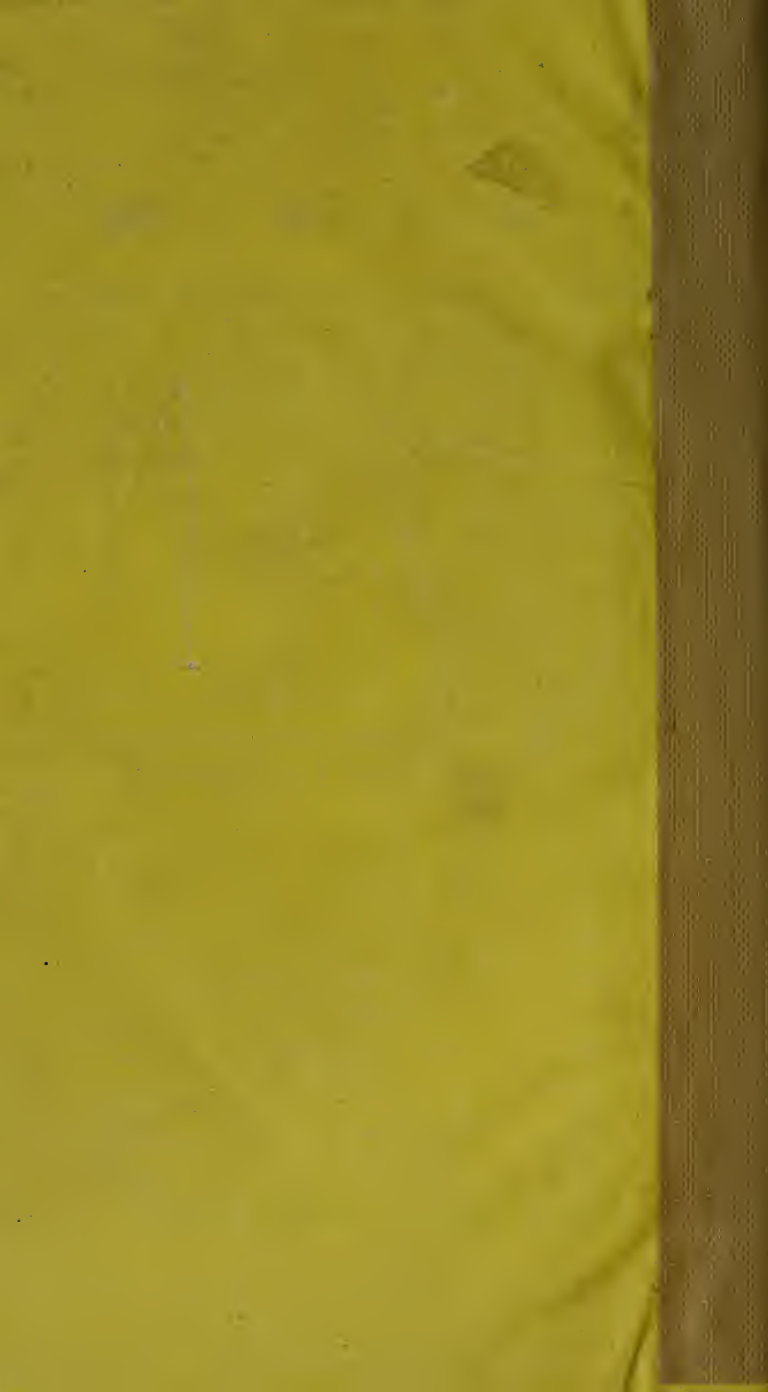
Mr. Dobison moved stealthily about, bowing, here and there, to people—his guests—whose very names were unknown to him, or forgotten as soon as heard, wishing heartily that the whole performance was over, but supposing he was only doing what was right; his girls danced to the utmost delight of their hearts, and the great heightening of their complexions; and Mrs. Dobison surveyed and directed the whole, as an able general regulates the arrangements and manœuvres of his entire force, presenting not a bad illustration of La Bruyere's sarcasm, *Elle est riche, elle mange bien, mais les coiffures changent, et*

lorsqu'elle y pense le moins, et qu'elle se croit heureuse, la sienne est hors de mode.

No matter, her ball was thoroughly successful: and Mr. and Mrs. Dobison, at length, at what is termed, according to circumstances, either an early or a late hour—closed their eyes, with the conviction that they had “done their duty.”

END OF VOL. I.

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